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The Conscience of Coralie

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The Conscience of Coralie

• By

F. Frankfort Moore

Author of

"The Jessamy Bride," "Nell Gwyn—Comedian,"
etc., etc.

With 8 Illustrations by F. H. Townsend

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CHAPTER I

"Politics," said the Minister of the Annexation Department, "politics is to patriotism what a pedlar is to—to—well, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That's the Chancellor of the Exchequer who has just come through the door on the right, and is congratulating Miss Roberts upon the success of her mother's tableaux last night."

"Is the Chancellor of the Exchequer a politician?" inquired Miss Coralie Randal.

"On the contrary, he is a patriot," said the Minister for Annexations.

"And are you a patriot or a politician, sir?" asked the girl.

"I am the head of the Annexation Department," he replied, enigmatically.

"What does that mean?"

"It means that I am on the side of the angels."

"That does not make your position any clearer to me. You see, I want to know all about the British Constitution, and the Government of Queen Victoria."

Miss Coralie Randal looked very serious—as a matter of fact, she nearly always did look serious, as

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serious as a child who is making perpetual inquiries. The inquiries made by Miss Coralie were unceasing.

"My dear young lady, her Majesty's Government doesn't run the British Constitution," said Sir Ecroyde. "Her Majesty's Government has difficulty enough running itself. Successful government is neither more nor less than a series of compromises with the Constitution."

"Is that a tenet of politics or a tenet of patriotism?" asked Coralie, after a pause.

The Minister laughed pleasantly—artlessly—before replying. Then he said:

"The first thing that a young and enthusiastic American woman should learn on coming to England, in order to understand much that she sees, is to make allowance for the point of view from which matters—institutions and actions—are judged."

"The point of view?" said the girl, thoughtfully—so thoughtfully that a wrinkle, like a stray cobweb, actually appeared upon her forehead—"the point of view? I never heard anything about the point of view. There is the point of view of an honest man and the point of view of a dishonest man; I never heard of a compromise."

"If you remain here long enough, you'll hear of nothing else," said the Minister. "Government by compromise is the most successful form of administration. And as for the point of view—well, in my young days there was an absurd and grossly injurious prejudice against red hair. You could not say anything worse about a girl than that she had red hair. Now, when a girl had hair that tended in that direction her enemies called it red, but her friends called

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it auburn; the idea of auburn hair conveyed nothing but an agreeable impression. This is, I venture to think, a very happy example of the operating of that subtle force known as the point of view. Have you ever heard a woman's enemies allude to her as stout and her friends refer to her as plump?"

"Oh, yes—often; but—"

"One must leave out that 'but' if one means to be a successful administrator, Miss Randal. The men who in a moment of weakness ended their sentences with 'but' are not sitting on the front benches in the room behind us; they are for the most part sitting on the remotest benches, and they never catch the speaker's eye."

"I am greatly disappointed. A door must either be open or shut."

"That's true as regards doors; but we were talking of men and women, were we not—men and women who undertake the government of men, women, and the Irish factions?"

"There is honesty and dishonesty."

"And there is black and white. My dear young lady, there is a wide range of shades between the two. If you doubt that fact, just glance at that lady who has just come on the terrace."

Coralie turned her eyes in the direction indicated by the Minister, and smiled as she saw a stout lady—not even her best friends could call her merely plump—wearing a sapphire-trimmed bonnet and a flame-coloured dress embroidered with orange.

"Suggestive of a burning bush, isn't she?" said the Minister. "Ah, one does not find American women making such mistakes. There's that blessed bell

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again. The wild Irishry are forcing on futile divisions."

"As if they had not divisions enough in their own household," said Lady Glasnamara, as the Minister hurried off the Terrace into the House to take part in the division which the ringing of the bell had notified as being imminent.

"Well, my dear, I hope you are now satisfied," she continued, smiling in Coralie's face. "You have every reason to be satisfied, I think. Did you ever fancy in America that you would one day engross the attention of a Cabinet Minister for a quarter of an hour?"

"I am wondering how he will know which lobby to go into," said Coralie. She had during the previous hour been made aware of some portions of the great House of Commons' machine. The technicalities of a division had been impressed upon her.

"Why, what is there for you to wonder at?" asked Lady Glasnamara.

"Sir Ecroyde has heard nothing of the discussion that led to the division; so how can he know anything of the merits of the case?—how can he know which lobby to go into?" asked the girl.

Lady Glasnamara looked at her wonderingly.

"Good heavens, child, what have the merits of the case got to do with going into the right lobby?" she asked in an affrighted whisper.

"If the member who has brought up the point on which the division is to be taken is in the right—"

"But how can he be in the right when he belongs to the wrong party?"

"Which is the wrong party?"

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"The party to which we are opposed, to be sure."

•• "Isn't that rather begging the question, Lady Glasnamara?"

• "I don't know anything about begging the question, my dear Coralie; but what I do know is that the Minister of the Annexation Department will not find himself bewildered on the question as to which lobby he is to go into. He will not run the chance of being bewildered, for he will not make the least inquiry on the point raised by the Irishman."

• "Then he will be guilty of a gross neglect of duty. What would be thought of a judge who would sentence a prisoner without hearing a single word of the case that was being tried?"

Lady Glasnamara laughed heartily; and it was possibly the sound of her laughter that caused her daughter Rosamund, who was talking to Algy Grafton, to turn round. When Rosamund turned round, Algy did so, too; and when Lady Glasnamara saw them observing her, she lifted up her hands in front of Coralie.

"You are too sweet!" she cried. "You actually fancy that the conscience of a member of Parliament—nay of a Cabinet Minister—works as freely as the conscience of a judge on the bench?"

"A conscience is a conscience," said Coralie, impressively.

• "And a horse is a horse; it would be quite as sensible for you to say that, ignoring the fact that there are Shire horses as well as hacks. A judge's conscience is of the Shire pattern, but something lighter does for work in Parliament. Conscience! Well, if Sir Ecroyde chanced, in his hurry, to go into the

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wrong lobby just now, it should lie heavy on your conscience for having interested him so as to make him forget his duty."

"His duty?—his duty is to—"

"Quite so: to vote with the Government party. Why, Coralie, you understand our systems no better than did the Emperor of Morocco. It was he who said, you know, when the Opposition were pointed out to him from the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery, 'Why don't the Government chop their heads off when they oppose them?'"

Coralie gave a laugh. She now and again had her lighter moments.

"I am still woefully ignorant in regard to British institutions, but I am learning things about them by degrees," she said. "I don't despair that by the time I am ready to go back to our side, I'll have come to understand how the machine works. I suppose it is the greatest machine the world has ever known."

She spoke her last sentence with a certain amount of resoluteness; she seemed to be doing her best to convince herself that her doubts as to the excellence of the British Constitution as a going concern were groundless. She had been conversing with a Cabinet Minister, and she had been within the precincts of the House of Commons; she had received several little shocks on being brought face to face with some incidents that she could not at once reconcile with that ideal Parliament which she had cherished since she had begun to think for herself. Still, she was able to impart a measure of enthusiasm to her exclamation.

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"I suppose it is the greatest machine the world has ever known."

"Yes," said Algy Grafton—he had strolled up with Rosamund, and Coralie had been looking at him when she made that bold attempt to convince herself that her apprehensions for the British Constitution were groundless. "Yes, it is a great machine. What a pity it is that such a machine should be worked by a gas engine."

"A gas engine?" asked Coralie.

"Yes; this building behind us is nothing but the National gasometer," said Algy. "You've heard some of the speeches, Miss Randal?"

"Yes; only one or two," she replied. "They were—"

"Gas, only without the pleasant risk of producing an explosion later on," laughed Algy.

"Don't talk so confidently; are there not still some Irish members in the House?" said Rosamund.

"The dear child takes things so seriously!" cried Lady Glasnamara.

"You don't mean to say that she takes the British Constitution seriously?" said Algy, looking from Lady Glasnamara to Coralie, with a humourous amazement on his face.

"Why, she even takes Sir Ecroyde seriously," cried her ladyship, in a whisper that had a suspicion of awe in it.

Algy pursed his lips and shook his head.

"The young woman who does not hesitate to take a Cabinet Minister seriously might be brought to fancy that the Irish parties were in earnest," said he.

"The Irish party—" began Coralie.

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"Parties," Algy said, interrupting her.

"You mean to tell me—to suggest that they are all a sham?"

"Ah, now you are taking me seriously—lumping me with the others in this racket."

"What, is nobody in earnest on this side?"

The girl looked imploringly at Rosamund. There was a pathetic note in her voice—the wail after a lost ideal. It touched Algy, the scoffer, and he was silent. It touched Rosamund, and she shook her head. It touched Lady Glasnamara, and she said she hoped tea would soon arrive.

"Is nobody in earnest?" cried Coralie again. This time she looked not at Rosamund, but at Algy.

"Captain Grafton, is nobody in earnest?" said Rosamund.

"Oh, yes; oh dear, yes. The people who are really in earnest are the actors," said Algy.

"The actors?"

"I'm dying for tea—and toast. I hope they do the toast hard here," said Lady Glasnamara.

"It's one of the worst restaurants in London," said Algy.

"Ah, Coralie, my dear, we make but a poor show in the way of hot cakes on this side," said Lady Glasnamara; and now Coralie had no reason to complain of any want of sincerity in her ladyship's tone of voice. "Ah, those hot tea-cakes which we had in America! There was hominy—ah, those hominy cakes! And then there were the flapjacks—ah, those flapjacks! and then the doughnuts—thank heaven, here is the tea at last!"

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Coralie gazed at her, and her voice was still more pathetic as she said once again to Rosamund:

“Is there nothing serious anywhere?”

. “Have you ever read an English novel?” said Rosamund.

CHAPTER II

They were sitting on the terrace of the House of Commons, and the month was May. Coralie Randal was the only daughter of Mr. Denis Randal, of Nokomis, Illinois, and Boston, Massachusetts. Every one has heard of Denis Randal, the pioneer of cold-packing, though few persons are acquainted with those romantic episodes in his career which led to his daughter's eventually going to England on a visit to Lord and Lady Glasnamara. As a matter of fact, Coralie herself could not understand how it was her father had always spoken of Lord Glasnamara as his greatest benefactor; and she was equally puzzled when she came to England and heard Lord Glasnamara refer to her father as *his* greatest benefactor.

Rosamund Joyce, who had been standing for a considerable space of time in a group that included Captain Algernon Grafton, was the only daughter of Lord and Lady Glasnamara. During the previous season she had been frequently a member of a group that included Algy Grafton. Painstaking observers had now and again seen both Algy and Rosamund doing their best—so the observers thought—to form themselves into a group of two only; and had awaited with interest the announcement of a marriage being "arranged" between the young man and the young woman. The season had come to an end, however,

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without such an announcement being made, and Algy had gone off to do a little fighting with his battery,—he was in Horse Artillery,—and having done it, had returned with a bronzed face and a slight limp—the latter due to the prod of a spear—to give the observers renewed opportunities of making their observations regarding his attitude towards Rosamund. They hoped that the confiding Irish nature of the Honourable Miss Joyce—they assumed that her nature was confiding—would not suffer a great shock when she came to find out that Captain Grafton was not in earnest.

Other observers gave it as their firm belief that Captain Grafton was in earnest; no man with a slight limp could avoid being in earnest, they asserted. It was about Miss Joyce they had their doubts. They wondered if she was, after all, just the same as other girls. What it was that they meant to express exactly by this their friends and confidants probably understood, being aware of the fact that one cannot be harder on a girl than to suggest that she is just the same as other girls.

Then there were people who said that Lord Glasnamara was an artful man—for an Irishman; while others expressed themselves of the belief that Lady Glasnamara was a clever woman—for an Englishwoman.

Thus it is that a good-looking man in possession of an income of ten thousand pounds a year, with reasonable expectations of a good deal more to follow, becomes stimulating to the imagination of such persons as turn him into a Topic.

But the young woman from America was in com-

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plete ignorance respecting Rosamund Joyce and her intentions in regard to Captain Grafton, the fact being that, although she had been living with the Glasnamaras for a week, she had never heard any particular emphasis laid upon the name of Algy Grafton. She really could not recall a single remark that had been made by any member of the household regarding him. She had only a faint recollection of having heard his name mentioned before Lady Glasnamara had presented her to him shortly after they had come upon the terrace; and he did not appear to her to differ greatly from the score of young men whom she had met during the week that she had been at the Glasnamaras'. Most of the young men had brown faces and seemed very healthy—so extremely healthy, in fact, that they never by any chance referred to their health.

They had ~~referred~~ with an extraordinary amount of interest, however, to the health of a horse named Old Mole, who was said to be suffering from *ennui*—*ennui* associated with the reflection that the Derby would not be run for a whole fortnight. That, at any rate, was the theory formulated by a youth who had sat next to her at dinner on the night after her arrival in London. He asked her if she was aware that Old Mole had declined to six to four, taken and offered, from three to two, the price at which he had stood three days before.

She had stared at the young man who put this question to her with bated breath.

"Old Mole?—ah, I suppose the owner is a student of 'Hamlet,'" she had said; she was herself a student of "Hamlet."

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"Hamlet — Hamlet? No, he's a student of Hayes," the young man had replied.

"Hayes?"

"Hayes—'Points of the Horse,' you know; the greatest living authority on the horse."

Then she had laughed, and the young man had turned to the young woman on the other side, and Coralie heard her affirm that she had known all along that Old Mole was a whistler.

This puzzled the American girl, who meant to give some attention to the course of modern thought in painting as well as in politics. She wondered if it was possible that the youth was only anxious to discuss a picture with her.

But during the next few days she heard the name of Old Mole almost hourly. And then she came to know something about England. A certain statesman had fallen grievously ill when at the point of introducing a legislative measure in which all classes were supposed to be interested. The newspapers contained from day to day a bulletin regarding his condition, and this bulletin sometimes ran to fifteen lines. The same newspapers published a daily account of the condition of Old Mole, and this account was never less than three-quarters of a column in length. Moreover, the type at the head of the column was nearly double the size of that which appeared above the paragraph relating to the illness of the great statesman.

Only upon one morning did the statesman shoulder the horse aside. When approaching convalescence he had a relapse, and the heading of this news was bolder than that which appeared above the name of

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Old Mole. The next day, however, the information regarding the statesman was crushed into a corner, and the chief page of every paper became murky with headlines following the announcement of "The Scratching of Old Mole."

Thus it was that Coralie first learned something about the Great Heart of England.

At her next dinner-party she ventured to allude to the illness of the legislator to a man who had taken her into the dining-room. The man was, she knew, a barrister of distinction, and he had become sympathetic in a moment, but had expressed the opinion that he was not in quite so bad a way as some people tried to make out for their own ends. Then, chancing to notice the man on the other side of her chair with an expression of interest on his face as he turned somewhat towards her, she asked him:

"Do you really think that the newspapers would try to make him out to be in a worse condition than he really is in?"

"It matters nothing to the newspapers now that he has been scratched," was the prompt reply.

She perceived at once how ridiculous she would make herself if she persisted in further allusions to the illness of a statesman, when a race-horse from whom great things had been expected—was not Old Mole the son of Badger and Earth Mother?—had just been scratched. (She had found out what to be "scratched" meant.)

Coralie had been carefully educated in the States on other points than the art of dressing well. She told Rosamund Joyce on the first day of her arrival that she felt that the whole object of a girl's life was

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not wherewithal she shall be clothed; but Rosamund had shaken her head and smiled.

"So some people told me long ago, but since I have been in the world I have found out that they were wrong," she said.

And then Coralie had asked her if she had ever read Emerson, and Rosamund had frankly confessed that she had not done so. When Coralie had said that Emerson was lovely, she, with equal frankness, admitted that she did not like books that could possibly be pronounced lovely. What, did she not like beautiful writing? Coralie inquired; and, after a pause, she said she disliked beautiful writing just as she disliked what was called oratory. Both fine writing and oratory made her suspicious of the sincerity of the writer and orator. What did she like, then? Oh, anything that was real—a story told in a straightforward way by a man who had a story to tell, a story that did not aim at improving, a play that made people laugh, a sermon that made one hopeful of the future of the world—yes, all these she liked well; but most of all she liked to read a good account of a battle—where deeds of heroism were done by men who fought, as Englishmen fought, for the good of the world.

As Rosamund made this confession, Coralie saw (for the first time) her face lighten and her eyes gleam.

At that time she had not heard the name of Captain Grafton so much mentioned.

"We are not made in the same mould," the American girl remarked, but not until a considerable space had elapsed. "I could not read an account of blood-

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shed; I am a member of the Brotherly Love Society of Nokomis. Our aim is to make war and bloodshed impossible."

"I hope your aims will be realised," said the English girl. "Where is Nokomis?"

"It's in Hebron County," replied Coralie. "Hiram Dewey is the president of the Brotherly Love Society."

"And who is Hiram Dewey?"

"What, you never heard of Hiram Dewey, the orator? Carpenter G. Hanker says he is the greatest orator that has lived since Demosthenes."

"And who is Carpenter G. Hanker?"

"Ah, now I see that you have been in jest all along; and I thought you in earnest. Every one must have heard of Carpenter G. Hanker, the Father of Personality."

"My ignorance is monumental. I am not in jest; I never heard of Carpenter G. Hanker, and I never heard of personality. I have heard of personalities in connection with successful oratory, but what is personality?"

"It's the noblest doctrine that was ever preached to the world—the doctrine of personal responsibility. I'll tell you all about it some day. And you'll read Emerson."

"If you make yourself responsible for me to the Brotherly Love Society, I see no alternative," said Rosamund. "Yes, and you shall tell me the names of all the great men who are in America, and give me a catalogue of all the great things they have done besides making a great deal of money. But in the

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meantime we must go to bed, in order to prepare ourselves for our respective task—yours being to tell me all about America and the doctrine of personal responsibility, and mine being to read Emerson. And so good-night, my dear."

CHAPTER III .

And now Coralie was seated by the side of Lady Glasnamara and Captain Grafton on the terrace of the House of Commons, drinking tea and eating cucumber sandwiches.

"Your expression is that of the disillusioned one," remarked Rosamund to her.

"How could it be otherwise?" said Algy Grafton. "Has Miss Randal not been conversing with a Cabinet Minister?"

"What I can't make out is why they should all talk to her so seriously," said Lady Glasnamara. "Do they all take it for granted that an American girl can only talk seriously?"

"Are you not now accusing Miss Randal of talking seriously rather than the statesmen?" suggested Algy.

"Oh, no; mamma only accused Miss Randal of listening seriously," said Rosamund. "Did you listen seriously, Coralie?"

"I listened seriously, but I heard nothing serious," replied Coralie. "I was so disappointed. I thought, that surely a statesman—well, I have been hearing so much about a horse since I came to England—and nobody could tell me where it was on Westminster Bridge that Wordsworth had stood when he composed his sonnet; no one could tell me if the bridge was actually the one that we see over there, or if it has

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been rebuilt since Wordsworth's day. Most of the people whom I asked had never heard of Wordsworth's Sonnet on Westminster Bridge; but I thought when I was face to face with a great statesman—"

"You did not talk to him of Old Mole; he knows more than any living man about the scratching of Old Mole; it was rumoured that he himself advised the taking of that extreme step," said Captain Grafton. "If it is found that he did, he will have to resign. There is no government strong enough to hold out against public opinion if it becomes known that a member of the Cabinet advised the scratching of a favourite."

"No; I didn't talk to him about Old Mole," said Coralie.

"It would have been of no use, Miss Randal," said Captain Grafton. "He would have replied to you evasively. Even a Cabinet Minister sometimes knows the topic on which to be discreet in his utterances."

"And what amazes me," said Lady Glasnamara, "is the way all these people talk to her."

"All what people?" inquired Rosamund.

"Important people—Cabinet Ministers, journalists; they all begin to talk to her upon some question—a great social or political question—a topic they would never dream of discussing with a girl at home," said Lady Glasnamara.

Coralie flushed slightly and gave a little laugh. Then she became grave once again and shook her head.

"They only touch on the fringe of any of the great questions," said she, slowly.

"Yes, but they wouldn't even touch upon a single tassel of the fringe of any of the questions with an

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English girl," cried Lady Glasnamara. "It seems natural that an American girl should come here to talk about—about—well, about problems, and—and ground rents, and game laws, and free education—yes, particularly free education, just as it seems natural for an English girl to talk only about the craze of the moment—the risk, the tableaux, the costumes in the play at the Criterion, and where she's going in the spring. It has just occurred to me that that is queer."

"If a girl is only as nice as Coralie a man will talk to her on any topic," said Rosamund. "Yes, and if a girl is only as clever as Coralie, she'll be able to reply to him on every topic he may introduce."

"Please don't say that," cried Coralie. "I came to England to learn everything, but up to the present I have learnt nothing. Everybody here seems to take it for granted that nobody wants to learn anything. That's the worst of it. When Mr. Dunbarton began to express his views the other night on the negro question, people shrugged their shoulders, and two or three whispered the word 'prig.'"

"And it seemed to me that word came in very handy," remarked Lady Glasnamara.

"He talked very well, didn't he?" said Coralie.

"Oh, yes; but the mistake was in talking at all," replied Lady Glasnamara.

"The negro problem is one of the most important that the twentieth century will have to face," said Coralie, stoutly.

"But why discuss it in a drawing-room in the nineteenth century?" cried Lady Glasnamara.

"Isn't there St. James's Hall as well as Exeter Hall?" asked Captain Grafton.

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"That's it," said Rosamund. "It is supposed in England that the best way to study the negro question is through the medium of the plantation song."

"The plantation song that is made in London," laughed Coralie.

"Exactly; that's the sort of thing that we understand—something about the 'lovely moon'—'luby' is, I believe, the exact pronunciation on our plantation somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Warwick-road—yes, it is made to rhyme with 'coon,' whatever a coon may be."

"It's something that grows in the tunnels of the Underground Railway," said Algy. "I heard a lot about coons and moons and tunes—pronounced 'toons' to meet the exigencies of the banjo—in the Sudan. Oh, the banjos that tinkled through that campaign! It was no wonder that the natives thought the object of the campaign was to spread the knowledge of the banjo through the benighted continent of Africa. The Sudan is pretty well paved with banjos by this time. But may I ask if you came from America to England to learn all about the great negro problem, Miss Randal?"

"I came here to study everything," replied Coralie. "That is, after I had got to the bottom of the Irish question," she added.

"And is there an Irish question now?" he asked. "I thought it was settled long ago. Surely I heard that it was settled. No? Well, how these rumours do get about."

Coralie turned away in silent disapproval of Captain Grafton's methods.

"Coralie is the truest Irish girl that was ever born

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in the United States," said Rosamund. "She has quite converted me to her principles, though I was born in Connaught. She believes in the regeneration of Ireland through the introduction of new industries and new capital to work them."

"I believe in the introduction of industry, and place less dependence on the industries," said Lady Glasnamara. "But here comes Sir Ecrovde and Mr. Lenaghan. Mr. Lenaghan will be glad to hear your views, my dear Coralie. He is one of the worst of the Irish irreconcilables."

Coralie watched the genial Minister of the Annexation Department strolling up by the side of a good-looking young man who was smiling broadly, as he was clearly in the act of giving Sir Ecrovde the best points in a story which he was telling with great animation. The Minister stopped in the middle of the terrace and actually roared with laughter, his hands on his ribs.

"The member for Killyfoyle has got hold of a new story, and the Minister for Annexations is about to annex it," said Captain Grafton.

A puzzled look—there was a shade of dismay in it—came to Coralie's face.

"That is the gentleman whom we heard just now denouncing the Government as the betrayers of Ireland while they are traitors to England," she cried, watching the Irish member doing a wonderful little bit of pantomime with his fingers in front of the over-come Minister of the Annexation Department.

"Oh, yes; he took care to abuse them on all points of the compass; he is a pattern of consistency," said Captain Grafton.

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"And Sir Ecroyde Fairleigh is a member of the Government that behaved so scandalously—didn't he say that they were little better than thieves? And when the—President—the Speaker called on him to apologise, didn't he say that he apologised most humbly—to the thieves?"

Coralie did not smile when recalling the little escapade on the part of Mr. Lenaghan, but Rosamund laughed as she said:

"Oh, yes; he is so amusing! He and Sir Ecroyde are great friends."

"What! great friends, though he was ready to affirm that Sir Ecroyde was one of a parcel of traitors and thieves?" cried Coralie.

"It would be rather unfair, wouldn't it, to accuse complete strangers of being traitors and thieves?" said Algy Grafton. "It's because he knows Sir Ecroyde so well that he speaks with such confidence of the Government crowd."

"Dear child, you would not have one man treat another as a leper because he happens to hold different political views? Good heavens! Where should we all be to-day if such principles became general?" said Lady Glasnamara, with upraised hands.

"Different political views—'traitors and thieves'—" murmured the American girl.

"Oh, you really are quite as uncivilized as the Emperor of Morocco. You would have the heads of the Opposition chopped off," said Lady Glasnamara.

"'Traitors and thieves'—and there he is treating one of them, in the friendliest way imaginable." Coralie had her eyes fixed on the Irish member as he promenaded with his arm through the arm of the

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Minister. He had made some progress with a second story—a story whose wit was of the type that demanded for its adequate translation a low voice and a twinkle beneath a quickly dropped eyelid—a type of wit that vanishes at the sound of a laugh. (The sole auditor knew better than to laugh; he was a connoisseur of the vintage of wit. He had indulged in many a tasting order in his younger days before he had entered Parliament.)

"I should like to hear that story of his," said Rosamund.

Algy Grafton gave a little affrighted gasp. Recovering himself, he smiled, saying:

"I can hear every word of it. Don't watch the man or you'll hear it, too."

"Dear child, you must not be so serious. It may be American, but it certainly is not natural," said Lady Glasnamara. "Haven't you heard that some years ago the highest tribunal in the kingdom announced that all Irish members were criminal conspirators—Mr. Lenaghan was among them. Do you think that they were regarded as social or political lepers in consequence? Nothing of the sort. Did any one fancy for a moment that the Government would be idiotic enough to prosecute them as criminals? No one. You see, the thing wasn't looked at seriously. Was any one shocked when the leader of one of the parties acknowledged on oath that he had made a deliberate misstatement with a view of grossly misleading the House of Commons?"

"Every one must have been shocked," said Coralie.

"People only laughed and shrugged their shoulders," said Lady Glasnamara. "You see, they were

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not startled by his confession; they had known all along that that particular leader had—shall I say, found it necessary to make a misleading statement now and again?"

"Why, is every one on this side a politician? Is no one a patriot? Sir Ecroyde told me what was the difference between politics and patriotism," cried Coralie. "Are you all playing a game?"

"It all comes right in the end, my dear," said Lady Glasnamara. "The general idea that prevails here is that Providence devotes a considerable portion of time to the protection of the best interests of Great Britain, and the theory is a plausible one. Great Britain certainly does not owe much to her Governments. But we must not become didactic; Jeremiah was the most serious politician that the world has ever known, and I don't believe that he ever was popular. The terrace is beginning to be overcrowded. Where has Captain Grafton gone with Rosamund? Oh, I see they are talking to the Tommy Traffords. You must get to know the Tommy Traffords. And here comes Sir Ecroyde back to you, by request of Mr. Lenaghan, I perceive. Ah, Sir Ecroyde, I hope you got the better of the wild Irishry. What did they divide about last?"

"Upon my word, I never found that out. Perhaps Lenaghan can tell you—at any rate it was he who challenged the division," said the Minister.

"Pray, Mr. Lenaghan, what was it all about?" said Lady Glasnamara.

"Upon my soul, I couldn't tell you to save my life—or what's dearer to me, my political reputation," replied the member for Killyfoyle. "But who is

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interested in the matter? Isn't any stick good enough to beat a dog with? Isn't any point good enough to bring about ructions for the Government?"

"I'm sure that it was Miss Randal who expressed a kindly interest in the cause of the division," said Sir Ecroyde—"the division that divides us," he added, with an affectation of gallantry that was by no means unsuccessful as a *tour de force*.

Coralie gave a little flush, which showed the Minister that she felt flattered at his remembering her name; and he felt that she had good reason for feeling flattered. Was not he a Cabinet Minister?

"Miss Randal is interested in a great many things," said Lady Glasnamara. "She is even interested in the Irish question—and, who knows, she may go further still and become interested in an Irish member."

"Pray give her the chance," said Sir Ecroyde.

"Let me present you to Mr. Lenaghan, Coralie," said Lady Glasnamara. "Mr. Lenaghan, Miss Coralie Randal."

CHAPTER IV

Mr. Lenaghan's bow was just a little too elaborate for daily use. It suggested the attempt of an ambitious actor to present his audience in an instant with a bird's-eye view of the reign of Louis Quatorze. It was a bow in stiff brocade, so to speak, and it only seemed a trifle elaborate because Mr. Lenaghan wore a loose frock coat and was somewhat baggy at the knees. Bagginess about the knees was unknown at the court of Louis Quatorze, therefore no genuflection seemed excessive.

Still, Coralie Randal was an extremely pretty girl, and it was taken for granted that as she came from the United States she was extremely wealthy. It was probably in Mr. Lenaghan's mind that in making his bow to her he was expressing his reverence for the whole race of American heiresses.

That was what was in the mind of Lady Glasnamara, at any rate, as she watched the member for Killyfoyle bending with his hat held at arm's length from his head before her charming young protégée. Killyfoyle had a very good-looking man as its representative, and an extremely ready man as well. It was said that Mr. Lenaghan was a gentleman; if he had been an Englishman, the fact of his great readiness would have prevented the rumour from gaining ground, but people were prepared for anything from

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an Irishman—anything except what was expected from other people. No one knew what he was going to do from day to day. How could any one know what he was going to do when he himself did not know? people asked. He declined to be bound by the worst traditions of Irish party politics, and so he was intensely hated and followed by a large section of one of the Irish parties. He knew that while one section of Irishmen will only follow the man whom they fear, another will only follow the man whom they hate.

He was quite content to be hated; he had defined hatred (for his own satisfaction) as the tribute paid by mediocrity to success. He felt that he had succeeded—yes, in being hated. But there never was a man in Parliament who had more friends, and they all watched him. They thought it quite as well not to take their eyes off him for any length of time. He was a man without a programme—a comet with an incalculable orbit, carrying a tail of infinite unimportance made up of particles which were (they fancied) permeated with the glow that came from the rapidity of his movements. That was one of the images employed by Sir Ecroyde in an honest attempt to describe him for party purposes. But the Minister of the Annexation Department knew perfectly well that, insignificant though the actual weight of a comet's tail may be, its influence as a portent has at all ages been enormous; and that was why he did not say anything more just at that moment regarding the followers of Mr. Lenaghan. He knew that he might have use for them some day—perhaps as a menace to a recalcitrant section of his own party—perhaps as

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an illustration of the importance of coercion in politics.

And now Sir Ecroyde, after listening to an amusing story told by Mr. Lenaghan, was watching him, and wondering if the American girl might possibly become a factor in the great Irish problem which was working itself out in England.

"You are one of us, Miss Randal," said the Irishman, with some degree of solemnity; he had in past days met girls with Irish names who had come from the States to see the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Bridge, and the spire of Salisbury Cathedral. He had also visited the States, and had read an American novel. That was why he had started with a suggestion of seriousness. "You are one of us."

"Am I?" said Miss Randal. "I really don't know for myself. What is it to be one of you, Mr. Lenaghan?"

"You have him in a tight place now, Miss Randal," said Sir Ecroyde. "I have been doing my best for some years to force him to define himself and his following."

"I will not attempt any definition," said Mr. Lenaghan. "No one looks for a definition to be anything except indefinite. If you have come to England to study the situation, you cannot but be one of us, Miss Randal. The name you bear is the same as was borne by the greatest hearts that ever bled for Ireland."

"The Harp that once through Tara's halls," said the Minister for Annexations. "Don't let him go on in that strain, Miss Randal. He needs every now and again to be reminded of the conditions of that concert at Tara's halls. 'The harp that once'—only

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once, mind you; that was reckoned quite enough, even by the most patriotic of Irish bards, that ever took good care to spend all their time in England."

"They cannot understand us—these strangers, Miss Randal," said Mr. Lenaghan, with a pitying shake of his head in the direction of Sir Ecroyde.

"Do you consider that an advantage, or otherwise, Mr. Lenaghan?" asked Lady Glasnamara; and Coralie laughed joyously. Mr. Lenaghan's face was in a moment cleared of its disguise of solemnity by her laugh.

"You don't come from Boston, or you wouldn't laugh at that," said the Irish member.

"I did not laugh unkindly; we were bracketed together before Lady Glasnamara put that question to us," said Coralie.

"Then I was in the most enviable position I have ever occupied," said Mr. Lenaghan, and again he was just a trifle overeffusive; but Lady Glasnamara remembered that there are still some Irishmen who make an art of paying compliments to women when they are young and good-looking. She had frequently remarked that such men do not look foolish after such a transaction, as an Englishman invariably does when he has unconsciously paid a woman a compliment.

"But for heaven's sake don't say that you have discovered a solution of the Irish question," resumed Mr. Lenaghan.

"I certainly cannot say that," answered Coralie.

"Thank heaven," said the Irishman. "Where would we all be if the Irish question was solved? Why, most of us would be actually obliged to live in Ireland—maybe to work."

"Oh, Mr. Lenaghan, are you not taking too gloomy

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a view of the matter? Surely it would not be so bad as that?" said Lady Glasnamara.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Lenaghan, shaking his head. "I like to take the most cheerful view of everything that comes under my notice, still, in this case—but never mind; you don't come to menace our existence as a political force, Miss Randal, so all's well," he added.

"I fancy that Miss Randal came to hear the roar of the British lion, rather than the twang of the Irish harp," said Sir Ecroyde.

"There's no time when the British lion roars so harshly as when he is irritated by the twang of the Irish harp," remarked Lady Glasnamara. "The sound acts on his nerves as the strumming on a tea-tray does upon a swarm of bees."

"Or as Luther's flute did upon the Foul Fiend," said Sir Ecroyde.

"That's a sort of compliment to us," said the Irishman.

"To you?" said the Minister.

"Yes, to us of the Irish harp party. The music is on our side, and the devil is on yours."

"Then I take back the compliment, and will say instead that the sound of the Irish harp acts upon the nervous system of the British lion as the speech of Lucifer did upon his audience at the first Home Rule meeting on record. Milton is still read in the States, is he not, Miss Randal?"

"I have read him throughout," replied the girl.

"But, after all, the Houses of Parliament cannot be said to be the habitat of the British lion," said the Minister.

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"That's true, indeed," acquiesced the Irish member. "He roars in this region as soft as any sucking dove. The truth of the matter, Miss Randal, is, that at St. Stephens he has degenerated into a good-sized tom-cat—a bit wheezy at times, but an excellent mouser still. He has got no more or less of the British lion about him than the average tom-cat has."

"And that's just the sort of animal we want here," said Lady Glasnamara. "We have only business for a cat. We have only a mouse or two to be run down. Pretty fools people would be who would keep a lion roaming about their house because they heard a mouse scratching in the wainscoting of their back kitchen."

"How about that eagle, Miss Randal?" said Captain Grafton. He had strolled back with Rosamund.

"That eagle?" asked Coralie.

"The bird of freedom, you know. Isn't he getting a bit bald on the poll, where his many friends insist on scratching him? Some one told me that he was getting quite bald, and that he will take a lump of sugar out of a stranger's hand."

"West Indian sugar," suggested the Minister. "Oh, yes, he has certainly developed a taste for West Indian sugar."

"I went out to the States in search of that bird some years ago," said Mr. Lennaghan.

"And you caught a glimpse of him?" said Captain Grafton.

"Several glimpses of him," replied the Irishman. "He seemed to me to be a strong and vigorous bird in the neighbourhood of Tammany Hill. He kept soaring about our heads during an Irish picnic; it was

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in aid of our campaigning fund. There were thirty-two speeches made, and a resolution was passed in the cool of the evening to the effect that the time had come when it was not merely permissible but obligatory for the President to declare war against England."

"That was the true note of the eagle; you had no reason to complain," remarked the Minister.

"I didn't. I thought I was getting on well enough for a stranger, going round with a hat among strangers; but I found out after a while that the nearer I got to Washington the more bedraggled did that fowl become, until in the private bureau of the President I found it eating bread and milk in a dark corner. 'What's that huddled-up thing?' I asked the President. 'That's the American eagle,' said he. 'It eats nothing but bread and milk. That's what keeps it in health. Oh, it's quite strong on its legs still, but of course it's never allowed to fly in the open now. It's wonderfully intelligent, and it still remembers a bar or two of "Yankee Doodle." Maybe it'll do it for you now. Come along, Uncle Sam, whistle "Yankee Doodle" for the gentleman. Come on now, "Yankee Doodle" came to—" If you don't whistle prettily, you shall have no more bread and milk. Come now; "Yankee Doo"—' but Yankee didn't. 'Drat the bird,' said the President, turning to me. 'It's like children who won't be shown off by their doting parents.' 'Thank you, sir,' said I. 'I can plainly see that there's not much show-off left with that bird. He wants to go asleep on his roost and be let alone. And so that's the American eagle?' 'That's the bird,' said the President. 'Well, yes, he does like to be left

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alone. We used to write our dispatches with the quills of his tail; but now we invariably use a typewriter, worked by a lady.' 'And what was the bird that circled over our heads at the picnic?' I inquired. 'Bless your soul,' said he, laughing, 'you surely weren't taken in by that imitation? Why, that's only a toy that soars when it's filled with gas; it's the escaping gas that raises the bellows by a revolving crank, and makes the squeal. Well, well, it has taken in many a stranger, but I thought that you—'. Oh, I beg your pardon; I'm making too much of the story.'

Mr. Lenaghan paused with an excellent assumption of the part of a man who has become suddenly embarrassed. There was a laugh here and there among his auditors, before Rosamund said:

"Pray finish your story, Mr. Lenaghan. What happened then?"

"Oh, then?—well, to tell you the truth, I shook hands with the President and came very humbly away. It was not until I was on the twenty-second floor of my hotel that I recollected I had not said one word to the President about the necessity of declaring war against England."

CHAPTER V

Every one in the group laughed. Only Coralie remained serious. The Minister for Annexations wondered if it showed bad taste on the part of the member for Killyfoyle to talk flippantly on the subject of the American eagle in the presence of an American girl. He knew that it would not matter how one talked in the presence of an American man; but with a girl—perhaps she had a pet bird of her own at home, which appeared in her eyes as a symbol—it was very different. He knew that even the most sensitive English girl would only laugh at any attempt to burlesque the gigantic symbol of England's power of roaring; but this was no guarantee that an American girl would appreciate the humour of dealing with the symbol of her country's freedom, as a caricaturist occasionally did, when in great need of something to contort, in order to force a grin to overspread the features of a common man or two. He was well aware of the complacency with which the insulting of a national symbol is regarded in England, and he had himself heard good Americans laughing at caricatures of their eagle. At the same time, he had always thought it as well not to make any remark that might tend to suggest that he did not take the American eagle seriously, in the presence of an American girl. The American girl took most things seriously, he

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knew—had not Miss Randal given him to understand that she took even the British Constitution seriously? And therefore he was not quite certain that Mr. Lenaghan's little story, though in itself abounding in a serious symbolic imagery, was either tactful or tasteful.

Still, he was not quite sure that it was lacking in either of these qualities.

Only Coralie Randal had not laughed, and disappointment was on her face.

Sir Ecroyde Fairleigh had gained his own position as a Cabinet Minister mainly by the exercise of tact and taste and an exhaustive study of his neighbours' shoes; from observing a certain inequality in the surface of the leather in the region of the toes, he was able to locate the corns of his friends, and of his enemies, and he had always been very careful to refrain from treading on even the least of them. Thus it was that he had got on in political life, and thus it was that some people—they had never reached Cabinet rank—were disposed to say of him that all his individuality had been educated out of him.

He was eminently an antiseptic politician.

When the more robust members of his party had sent flying about the chamber words that produced wounds which were liable to rankle, it was his business to come forward and endeavour to prevent the spread of the mischief. His voice was like the antiseptic spray. He could make the neatest of phrases, and he kept them tied up in neat little bundles, so to speak, like the dried herbs suspended from the ceilings of the still-rooms of our grandmothers. They were always ready for use, and they were invariably

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dry; none of them were fresh, but few had been so long hung as to be flavourless.

The savour of the still-room pervaded his speeches; listening to them, one thought of pot-pourri and one's grandmother, and that is why they were so greatly liked; one cannot but like something that recalls one's grandmother. In private conversation he was usually neat, and he invariably made himself understood, except when he became epigrammatic.

And now he was watching the lines of disappointment on the face of the beautiful American girl, before the Irish member said:

"It's going to be a long evening. I think I should do a little more obstruction. Those rascals on the Government benches will get through supply too easily if we don't mind. Have you been inside the doo-house behind us, Miss Randal?"

"We were there for an hour; it was less interesting than looking down the engine-room of the Paris," said Coralie.

"I believe you. The House of Lords is the British tabby-cat asleep—yes, and snoring, too," said Mr. Lenaghan.

"We were in the House of Commons," said Coralie.

"Oh, that's the tom-cat asleep, but not snoring. And there you were in the most intolerable position that a woman can occupy; a position where she can see everything without being seen. Can't we get up something for the entertainment of the young American lady, Mr. Secretary?" and Mr. Lenaghan laid his hand on the shoulder of Sir Ecroyde.

The Minister was slightly startled, for he was in

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the act of speaking to Rosamund Joyce, and his back was turned to the others of the party. •

"Do you notice that man, how he started?" asked the Irishman. "It's no wonder. The Minister for Annexations! Are you familiar with the story of how Great Britain acquired the Calipash Islands? It's no wonder he fancies that a policeman is behind him."

Coralie laughed, but not heartily. She laughed as though she were sorry she had to laugh.

"Can't we do something inside to amuse our charming stranger?" said the member for Killyfoyle. "You're one of the managers of the show, my good fellow, but you've no sense of the responsibilities of your position. If any variety theatre was to be run on the same lines, it would be bankrupt in a week. Just think of the sort of thing that has been going on all day—supply, the wash-house vote, the new linoleum for the back-stairs, the new paper-cutters for the Office of the Stanaries! You should be ashamed of yourself. Do you call that any sort of entertainment for a young lady from America?"

"Miss Randal is most unfortunate in her visit," said Sir Ecroyde, quite apologetically. "If you will honour us some time when there's a debate going on—"

He was actually doing the part of the apologetic host, whose cook has given notice, when he was interrupted by Mr. Lenaghan.

"That's all very well," he cried, "but all the apologies in the world won't compensate Miss Randal for a wasted day. Surely, if we lay our heads together we can do something."

"I really cannot see that, in the circumstances—"

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"I have it," cried the Irishman. "Miss Randal, you'll have a chance of seeing the British tom-cat awake to chase a mouse."

Coralie looked puzzled.

"What on earth do you mean, Mr. Lenaghan?" cried Lady Glasnamara—she it was who had laughed.

"I mean to give your charming young friend a picture of the House that she'll remember. I don't want her to go across the Atlantic with the notion that it's always as poor an entertainment as it was to-day, when she was inside. I am going to make what's vulgarly known as a 'scene,' and get named."

"For heaven's sake!" cried the minister.

"Come along, man; you'll be necessary to move my suspension," said Mr. Lenaghan.

"Oh, please don't put yourself to so much trouble," said Coralie. She wondered how it was that that very foolish man did not perceive that every moment only added to her pained impression of the whole thing—the mother of Parliaments within the shadow of Westminster Abbey; Westminster Bridge, where Wordsworth had written his sonnet, that nobody except herself seemed to have read; the Union Jack floating above the clock-tower; the aspirations of Ireland—the whole thing was a travesty of power, and no one thought of being in earnest—no one but that Irishman, and he was only in earnest in his endeavour to make her more deeply impressed with the farcical aspects of what she had always believed to be the noblest institution in the world.

"Oh, please don't put yourself to so much trouble," she cried again, when every one laughed, and so made a move towards the entrance to the House.

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"It's no trouble, it's a sacred duty," said the member. "It's about my time for making a scene in the House. I've been quiet as a mouse all the session, and the rascals are having it their own way. If I didn't do something in the obstruction line, it's no chance I'd have of being returned again for Killyfoyle. My constituents are conscientious to a man. Come along, Miss Randal. It's poor enough fun, but it's the best we can offer you. I said that I had been quiet as a mouse; well, now you'll see what a mouser the British domestic lion is."

Again every one laughed, as Mr. Lenaghan went off as eagerly as a boy to the members' entrance, shaking off Sir Ecroyde, who was apparently remonstrating with him in an undertone.

What could poor Coralie do? She could not hope to rival the member for Killyfoyle by making a scene on the terrace, through declining to follow her friends to view him making a scene in the House. She could only follow them silently to the ladies' gallery—even in the suggestion that such a place with such approaches was meant for the accommodation of ladies, she seemed to perceive the elements of the all-pervading burlesque.

Before she had seated herself behind the grille, the thing had begun. She felt that it was a sorry scene, though her friends seemed to be intensely amused at it in all its phases.

Mr. Lenaghan, after addressing a few words to a brother member and receiving a reply, sprang to his feet, and denounced in the most fluent way the gross attempt which he declared was being made by the Government to group together certain votes in con-

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nection with the department of the stanaries. This trick had for its object the concealment of the exact sum disbursed in salaries to men who were content, he said, to receive these salaries as bribes for supporting a government one half of which was composed of men who were partly knaves and partly fools, and another half partly fools and partly knaves, and the remainder persons of the stamp of the right honourable gentleman who had founded an undeniable claim to an ignominious place in history, made by accepting the portfolio of the Annexation Department.

Several members at this point rose to order, and the House, which was practically empty when Mr. Lenaghan rose, was beginning to fill. Cheers from one quarter greeted the remarks of the member for Killyfoyle, and some from another quarter; the eager protests of the men who had materially increased the disorder by rising to a point of order. The Chairman of the Committee, endeavouring to make his voice heard above the growing tumult, was understood to say that the member for Killyfoyle must confine his remarks to the particular vote before the committee, which was that for the blotting-paper for the department of the stanaries.

Mr. Lenaghan said that the character of the vote was certainly in sympathy with his remarks, for it seemed as if the qualities of absorption, which were characteristic of blotting-paper, were those which were emulated by certain hangers-on of the Government in the House, who, having shown themselves willing to swallow the criminal policy formulated by the First Lord of the Treasury and the right honourable gentleman who was delighted to play the part of

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Leporello to his Don Juan— [Laughter and cheers, with cries of "Order, order."]

The Chairman—The honourable member is not entitled, in criticising the vote before the committee, to refer to the policy of Her Majesty's Ministers.

Mr. Lenaghan—I am certainly entitled to refer to the flirtations of the right honourable the First Lord of the Treasury—political flirtations, I mean, of course. ~~I~~ would never for a moment suggest that the right honourable gentleman would be so indiscreet as to conduct those lighter passages of a wholly dishonourable career with—

The Chairman—The honourable member must withdraw that expression.

Mr. Lenaghan—If you object to my referring to the life of alternate bullying and cajolery pursued by the right honourable gentleman as a career, I gladly withdraw the expression, and substitute for the word "career" the word "game."

The Chairman—Order, order. The honourable member must withdraw the expression "dishonourable."

Mr. Lenaghan—I will gladly withdraw it, sir, if I can think of any stronger word; not till then.

The Chairman—Does the honourable member decline to withdraw the expression?

Mr. Lenaghan—Sir, I withdraw the word "dishonourable" and substitute the word "infamous," and if any stronger word occurs to me— [Shouts of "Order, order," and tumult, several members speaking at the same time.]

The Chairman, after endeavouring to make himself audible, sent for the Speaker, and while the Speaker

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was coming there was a scene of indescribable confusion, several members menacing with frantic gestures the member for Killyfoyle, who sat with his arms folded, smiling at them.

The Speaker, on taking the chair, received the explanation offered to him by the Chairman of Committee, and called upon the honourable member for Killyfoyle to withdraw the expressions "dishonourable" and "infamous," as applied to the head of Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Lenaghan—Sir, I decline to withdraw expressions which appear to me admirably adapted to the course of knavery—

The Speaker—I am reluctantly compelled to name Mr. Constantine Lenaghan.

The Minister for Annexations—It is with great pain that I have to move the suspension of the honourable member during the present sitting. [Cheers, and cries of "Calipash" from the Irish members.]

Another member of the Government seconded the motion for the suspension of Mr. Lenaghan, and the Speaker formally announced the suspension of the honourable member for Killyfoyle, and ordered his withdrawal from the Chamber.

With a well-executed bow—"in it were combined feeling of the utmost respect for the Speaker personally, with those of contempt for the injustice of which he was the executive mouthpiece," the Parliamentary correspondent of the *Killyfoyle Clarion* stated in his report of the incident, and the bow—Mr. Lenaghan left the Chamber.

He met Coralie on the terrace immediately afterwards. His face was beaming with good humour.

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"That's what the newspapers call a 'scene in the House,' Miss Randal," said he. "It's not much of an entertainment, I admit, but it's better than nothing. What do you think of it?"

"I never want to be near the House of Commons again," said Coralie. "I never want to hear anything about the Irish question again."

"It is not to Parliament but to the people we must look for freedom," said a voice behind her.

She turned, and saw a man standing by the side of Rosamund and her brother, who had just come upon the terrace. The man seemed about thirty years of age. He wore a soft hat, a Norfolk jacket, and a rough flannel shirt. He had eyes that startled people, and a mouth that should have startled them very much more than did his eyes, but for the fact that people generally pay little attention to mouths, devoting all their time to eyes.

"It is laid on us to work out our own freedom," said the man, throwing back his head and looking straight out before him. His look suggested a man striking a blow straight from the shoulder.

"Who is that gentleman—that man?" said Coralie. She felt her head going back just as the man's had done as she put the question to Lady Glasnamara.

"That is Bernard Mott, the socialist; he is Barry's great friend," said Lady Glasnamara. Barry was her eldest son; he had come on the terrace with the stranger, and was standing in the group with Rosamund.

"That man at least is in earnest," cried Coralie.

"Ay, that's the worst of it; he's desperately in earnest," said Mr. Lenaghan.

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"And he is a socialist?"

"Of course he is. You see his flannel shirt. Can a man go further than that in proving himself a socialist? And the soft hat! Have you ever noticed, Miss Randal, that socialism, and anti-vaccination, and vegetarianism, and soft hats, and mediocrity all go together?"

"There is one man in London who is in earnest, and that's something," said Coralie.

"Oh!" said Mr. Lefaghan.

CHAPTER VI

It was Barry Joyce who brought his friend Bernard Mott to Coralie. Barry Joyce was clearly some years the junior of his friend whom he presented to the girl, and there was about him something that could only be described as a reflected glory from this friend of his. That, at any rate, is what occurred to Coralie as she saw the two men standing side by side. The dominant man makes his influence felt in many ways, she knew. That is how it is that the mannerisms of the leader of a party in politics, in art, in thought, are caught by his followers—his tricks of style, his gait, his methods of expressing himself. Thus it is that the fable of the strong man who gets stronger while the people around him get weaker has a meaning still. The followers of the dominant man act as feeders to him, so to speak, on the same principle that the meteorites feed the sun. The votaries are compelled to merge their individuality in the overwhelming personality of the god.

Coralie fancied that she could detect in Barry's sudden throwing back of his head a reflection of Bernard Mott. She was quite unconscious of having herself reflected the same movement, which had seemed so striking in the man, though Barry Joyce had noticed the similarity between the quick lifting of her head and the favourite movement on the part of his friend.

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"You are one of us," said the socialist, the moment that Barry had pronounced Coralie's name.

"I will say good-bye, or, if you will allow me, *au revoir*, Miss Randal," said the member for Killyfoyle.

Coralie suffered herself to be interrupted in her gaze at Mr. Mott, who was looking at her straight in the face with those extraordinary eyes of his; but she did not do so without a little *crayon* curve, which might almost be called a frown, appearing between her eyes.

"Good-bye," she said, giving Mr. Lenaghan her hand, and before he had more than touched it, sending her eyes back to the frank face of Bernard Mott.

She apparently had not heard what Mr. Lenaghan had said about good-bye and *au revoir*, or she would not have been guilty of the rudeness implied in her choice of the word.

The Irishman imparted a certain amount of stiffness to the raising of his hat, and his bow was so studiously polite as to be almost disagreeable. He walked away without a word, except to Lady Glasnamara.

He felt bitterly disappointed in that American girl. He had at various periods of his life felt all the bitterness of the disillusioned one, which is only another way of saying that he was a man of imagination. A few minutes spent by him in the company of a young and pretty woman were sufficient to stimulate his imagination to such a degree as to bring before his eyes a succession of dioramic pictures of his future—and hers—full of light and colour and movement and music. His enjoyment of splendid possibilities was as strong as most other men's

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enjoyment of the realities of life. And as a natural consequence, the dissolving of the views plunged him into the depths of bitterness—yes, sometimes for nearly as long as half an hour.

He was now in the depths, as he walked away from St. Stephen's. That pretty American girl—no matter how bitterly he felt, he was still just; he was ready to acknowledge that she was pretty—had treated him very badly. He could not recollect ever having been treated so badly before. He had done his best to entertain her. He wondered what member of the House of Commons would have shown the same readiness in getting up that scene for the entertainment of a girl with whom he had been acquainted only half an hour. He felt convinced that no other man would have gone so far; and he probably did not take too narrow a view of the matter, and yet she had quite failed to appreciate the spirit of hospitality which had actuated him—that desire on his part that she should see the House of Commons at its best. None of the people who had been about her had seemed to care though the House was as dull as Parliament can possibly be—and that is saying a good deal—when she had been behind the grating; he alone had taken a conscientious view of the duties of a host, and had been at some pains to make the entertainment "go." And yet the moment that that man Mott—a socialist, mind! a revolutionary scoundrel, without any respect for law and order—had come up, she had given all her attention to him, and had been brusque, even to a point of rudeness, to the man who had gone so far as to turn the dulness of the House of Commons into liveliness simply to gratify her.

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He felt that all that people had written in the past of the ingratitude of woman was quite inadequate to enable the world to estimate it correctly and prevent mistakes from being made in the future. But so far as he himself was concerned, he had learned his lesson—thank God!—in time; he had not yet been made a fool of by Mott—Bernard Mott, the socialist. And yet there were some people ready to affirm that American girls were singularly appreciative of any attention that was shown to them. Ah, how little people knew of American girls! But he had learned his lesson.

He was profoundly dejected for close upon twenty minutes, but then he found himself some distance down Piccadilly, and he remembered that in Sloane Street there lived a lady of his acquaintance who had won a certain reputation for dainty little teas with the world of fashion, and for a sympathetic manner with such men as stand in need of sympathy—and what man can say that he does not? In the course of ten minutes, Mr. Lenaghan found himself seated face to face with this appreciative woman, whose pleasant laughter at his description of the “scene” which he had organised in the House of Commons caused him to feel that, after all, it had not been enacted in vain.

“You are one of us,” said Bernard Mott again. His eyes were still fixed upon Coralie’s face. He had not shown himself to be in the least aggrieved at her not answering his question when he had put it before, and she had turned aside to say good-bye to the other man. He did not fail to notice that it was good-bye, and not *au revoir*, that she had said to that other man.

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"Those were the very words that were said to me in this place, half an hour ago." There was no smile on Coralie's face as she spoke. She was too thankful for a moment of seriousness to jeopardise its continuance. It was Bernard Mott who smiled. His smile was that of a man who is easily tolerant of plagiarists—even of those who plagiarised his remarks before he uttered them.

"Barry Joyce talked to me about you; I longed to meet you; you are one of us, I know," he cried, with more than a little enthusiasm—the enthusiasm that comes from conviction.

"Am I?" she said, rather weakly.

"Are you not?" he cried.

"I am only a learner," she said.

"I knew it; we are the only brotherhood of true learners in the world," said Mott. "We only are those who have learned aright the stern teaching afforded us by the history, not of one nation or one people, mind, but of mankind. We only have learned to interpret aright the signs of the times. Brotherhood, that is the gospel which we have learned. That is the doctrine which we preach. What is the gospel preached within the building behind us? All this week has been devoted to the votes for the Army and the Navy. Brotherhood! They have told their dupes that England can only be safe if her Army and Navy be increased. That means that the people, who are already ground down by taxation, will have to pay an extra three millions, perhaps five. Three millions at least; and think what you can do with three millions a year. Give me three millions a year, and I will guarantee that there is not a discon-



Here was a man at last - a man who was in earnest.

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tented man or woman in England, Scotland, or Ireland."

His eyes sparkled, his hands were clenched, and once again he threw back his head. He was breathing hard, even before he had ended his impassioned speech.

Coralie's eyes also were gleaming as she watched the man. Here was a man at last, she felt—a man who was in earnest, a man who had cast behind him all the musty old traditions of the past, and was ready to show the world that civilisation does not mean the increase of agents of destruction, but the promulgation of the Spirit of Brotherhood.

That word "Brotherhood"—was there a nobler word in any language? She herself had often felt that the only true religion is that which would bind man closer to man in that bond of brotherhood referred to by the man who stood before her.

"I am one of you," she said, in a low but firm voice.

He smiled again, the smile of the man who knows his own ground and is accustomed to conquer.

"I knew it," he cried, in a voice which, though low enough to be almost confidential, had a clear note of triumph running through it. "I knew that such a soul as yours was not given over to the shallowness of fashion or fashionable society. I could see sympathy in your eyes—sympathy for mankind that suffers, waiting, waiting for deliverance from its oppressors. I knew that you belonged to us, though you may not have known it yourself. Well, you know it now."

"Yes, I think I know it now," said she, with the

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ready and mechanical obedience of the one who is hypnotised.

"I knew it all along," cried Barry Joyce; and both Coralie and the socialist turned about and looked at him. It seemed as if they were startled by his sudden breaking in upon their conversation. Barry had been standing by, and had suffered himself to be ignored by the others.

They looked at him. He blushed for a few moments, but then, seeming to remember, as if by an effort, that he had done nothing to be ashamed of, he became bold. He did not apologise for thrusting himself forward; they might perhaps have accepted his blush as an apology if they thought one was necessary.

"I knew all along that you were one of us," he cried again. "You are in earnest; so are we."

Bernard Mott, the socialist, laid his right hand on the shoulder of the Honourable Barry Joyce, and there was the suggestion of patronage in the act. He smiled—good-naturedly, tolerantly—at the young man, and then he turned with another smile to the girl, as if he were inviting her to observe his toleration.

"Yes," he said. "My friend and brother told me how different you were from other young women. He was not wrong. He is learning, I trust, to look at humanity through his eyes, and not through the distorting medium of the world of fashion—fashion—what is fashion?"

"I am so sorry for interrupting an oracle, but it is already six o'clock, and we have two calls to make before dining early for the opera." The voice was

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the voice of Rosamund; she had approached the group without being seen by any member of it. How could any one see any one else when Bernard Mott was speaking?

Bernard Mott looked as if he resented the interruption. But Coralie, having been surprised into taking her attention away from him, smiled, saying:

"What is fashion? Is not that a complete reply to your question, Mr. Mott? An hour on the terrace of the House of Commons, two calls to make in a carriage, then a dinner with bare necks and footmen, and the opera to follow? Is not that what fashion means?"

"You have made one rather important omission, my dear," said Rosamund. "You have not included in your list of what constitutes fashion a discourse with Mr. Mott, the prophet of socialism. I can assure you that nothing is so deliberately fashionable just now as socialism. Come along. Of course you are not coming with us, Barry. Good-bye, Mr. Mott. Do not set the House of Commons or Westminster Abbey or the Thames on fire this evening. It is such a lovely evening, and the new flats in this neighbourhood should be allowed to retain their cleanness until the summer is over."

• CHAPTER VII •

He had distinctly appealed to her. He had come before her at precisely the right moment. Somehow Bernard Mott managed to appear before a good many people at exactly the right moment. It was a thorough knowledge of what constitutes the right and the wrong moment that caused Bernard Mott to appeal to so many people. After all, it is the same knowledge that makes a Cabinet Minister achieve success and become nearly as popular, for a time, as the stage manager of a theatre. Bernard Mott had appeared before her at the right moment. She had had demonstrated to her the extreme folly of some things which she had previously believed to be amongst the wisest things that the world contained. The majesty of the House of Commons, the character of a Cabinet Minister, the sincerity of an Irish leader—the very thought of any one of these entities had during all her life previous to coming on the terrace filled her with awe—a kind of awe; not, of course, the awe with which she had approached Westminster Bridge, where she believed Wordsworth had written his sonnet, until some one had doubted if it was actually the same bridge—people were so fond of improving away the most sacred associations in England; not, of course, the same awe that had been hers on seeing Westminster Abbey for the first time, but still with a

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measure of the same overwhelming feeling. Then during her first half-hour on the terrace, where several distinguished people and a good many undistinguished people were drinking tea, she had been disillusioned. She had been brought behind the scenes in the play-house, as it were, and had come to see that what she had fancied was gold was not even gilt, but merely touched up with an inferior sort of leaf altogether.

No one near her had taken any of these things seriously. It had seemed quite droll to them that she should think so highly of the British Constitution. They did not know that she had for years been studying all that could be studied regarding this same British Constitution. They did not know how she had studied the gradual progress of the freedom of the race who called themselves English, from the days when Magna Charta was framed down to the abolition of slavery, with Catholic emancipation in Ireland, and the removal of the disabilities of Jews. They did not know how she had studied the progress of this British freedom through the history of the United States—that great nation which owed its existence to the implanting of the same passionate love of freedom in the nature of those Englishmen who had crossed the Atlantic in the old days. Had they known what her feelings had been on landing in England, the people whom she met would not have shrugged their shoulders in her moment of disillusionment. They would not have thought it so very droll that she should have looked for something serious. They would have offered her their sympathy.

She looked for sympathy, and suddenly Bernard Mott appeared before her. His voice, that had come

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upon her ear even before she had turned and seen him, had stirred her. There was nothing of the shoulder-shrugging in those words. They were the words of a man—a man who has principles to fight for, and who would not, when the right moment came, shrink from fighting for those principles, even though that fight should mean death to himself.

That was what she said to Rosamund while driving to the two houses where calls were due.

"He is not the sort of man who would fight for himself; he would be quite content if he knew that his principles would gain ground through his dying for them."

Those were her exact words. They were enthusiastic words, and she meant them to be so. During the latter half of the week which she had spent in London she had been somewhat reserved in expressing herself, for though Rosamund had always treated the previous expression of her enthusiasm with the greatest courtesy, she had now and again an uneasy impression that Rosamund was courteous to her only as she was courteous to the strange people who were to be seen in some drawing-rooms—queer poets, queer actors, queer explorers: interesting people, it might be, to watch from a distance, but still queer.

Now, however, she was ready to defy every one. Rosamund might be as courteous to her as she thought fit, still she would not feel hurt or ashamed. She had spoken with a man of enthusiasms and had heard him speak what he felt, none making him afraid. She would follow him.

"He is the sort of man who would die for his principles," she cried.

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"I daresay; but I fancy he would prefer to live by them," said Rosamund.

This response was certainly disheartening. But it was only to be expected that Rosamund would say something disheartening on the subject of Bernard Mott. Rosamund, who had admitted that she was delighted to read of battles, could not but sneer at brotherhood—universal brotherhood, which, as every one knows, will, after a good deal of fighting, make battles impossible.

"Do you mean that Mr. Bernard Mott is not in earnest," said Coralie, with some measure of asperity in her voice.

Rosamund looked at her and laughed.

"You expect me to give you a straightforward reply while you hold that pistol at my head?" she asked.

"Pistol—what pistol?"

"It is in your voice, my dear. There was a distinct threat in your tone. You said in effect: 'You may give me any answer you please, but unless you give me the one I want, I decline to believe you.'"

"I am sure that I didn't mean to be so rude, only—"

"Oh, my dear Coralie, don't be so weak as to talk of rudeness. Even if you were rude—but you were not—do you fancy that any great cause can be advanced in kid gloves? I, at any rate, am not so foolish. I have seen the beginning and the end of many great 'causes' during the four years that I have been in the world, and I have seen how powerful an auxiliary is rudeness in the realisation of one's aims. But you weren't rude."

"It would be rude to hold a pistol to any one's head."

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"Then it was I that was rude, after all, in suggesting that there was a derring tone in your voice. So I apologise on my bended knees—take the bending for granted."

"Oh, don't be foolish! You don't like Bernard Mott."

"Do I not, really? Perhaps I don't. I haven't thought about it, that's the truth."

Coralie shook her head with a show of infinite sagacity as she said:

"Ah, my dear Rosamund, one does not need to think whether one likes a man or not—a man such as Mr. Bernard Mott."

"So much the better for Mr. Bernard Mott," said Rosamund, after a little pause. "You like him, at any rate. You would not have delivered that aphorism unless you like him."

"Yes, I certainly do like him," cried Coralie, boldly. "How could I do otherwise than like him? He spoke the first sincere words that I have heard since I came to England. He is the first person whom I have met that seems to be in earnest. He is the only one whose horizon is not limited, but whose scope is the world."

"That is because you have not met any of the people who manufacture patent medicines," said Rosamund, quietly. "Their horizon is not limited. They are ready to cure every complaint under the sun. We call such people quacks, and don't admit them into society until they have made large fortunes."

"What have that sort of people got to do, with Mr. Bernard Mott?" cried Coralie, with some measure of impatience. "Bernard Mott is not a quack."

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"On the contrary, he is a very clever young man," said Rosamond. "What did he say to you? I was outside the sphere of his influence—the phrase is one of diplomacy, I believe."

"He said that—that—but you must often have heard him state what his aims are; he is such an intimate friend of your brother."

"Oh, yes; he is a great friend of Barry's, and I have often heard him state what are his aims—some of his aims. But I wonder what he said to you."

"He told me what he hoped to accomplish—brotherhood, universal brotherhood. That is an aim worth giving up one's life to accomplish."

"Is it? But there are lives and lives. The truth of that dictum largely depends on the life that's to be given up. Well, what else did he say?"

Coralie was trying to recollect exactly what the man had said. She thought it strange that she should find some difficulty in recollecting a single sentence of the speech that had so carried her away. She began to think that it was rather unfair for Rosamund to cross-examine her in such a way. It was this curious feeling of irritation that stimulated her to recollect the drift of what Mr. Mott had said in his earlier sentences. "His aim is to make war impossible," she cried. "Yes, the shameful waste of money that is going on at present to keep up the Army and Navy will be arrested. The millions that are now thrown away upon guns and swords will be divided among the people who are left to starve in the present shameful condition of things. Brotherhood means peace and contentment."

"Does it?" said Rosamund. "Oh, Bernard Mott—

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Bernard Mott! These men know so much about the world and the inhabitants thereof. Brotherhood, peace, contentment! Yes, the old programme. The nature of the animal man is to be changed in the twinkling of an eye. The soldier who has been the hero of the world for thousands and tens of thousands of years is to be deposed, and Bernard Mott is to take his place. The last fight that will take place in the world will be between Bernard Mott and the soldier hero. Well, I'll back the soldier.'

Coralie smiled.

"I knew you would say that," she cried. "But that's just where you'll make the mistake. The day of brains is dawning. Nothing—not even the soldier hero—can stand against the onward march of the men who have the brains."

"Brains are not worth very much when the soldier clubs his rifle and sends them spattering about," said Rosamund, with some degree of grimness. "Well, you had a profitable ten minutes with Mr. Mott, so the day has not been spent in vain, even though Melba should fail to carry us out of our box as Juliet."

It so happened, however, that Madame Melba had never sung in the opera with greater passion than she displayed this night. She overwhelmed the little party in Lady Glasnamara's box, and although Coralie had, on starting, felt that she would much rather stay at home and read and think over the possible problems suggested by the programme which Bernard Mott had waved before her eyes like a flag, still, before she had been in the opera-house for an hour, she had felt herself to be a part of that glowing drama

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of passion and sword-thrusts and revenge and faction and violent deaths.

She kept her eyes fixed upon the stage, and was carried away by that surge of poetry and passion until she was breathless.

"After all, she is a woman like the rest of us," said Rosamund to her friend, Captain Grafton, as he pointed out to her the eyes of Coralie flashing with the flashing of the swords of Mercutio and the fiery Tybalt, and her hands instinctively coming together to applaud that fierce lunge of Romeo's through the body of the man who had killed his friend.

"That is the triumph of nature over brains," whispered Algy Grafton.

Rosamund knew what it was he was trying to say.

CHAPTER VIII

"No matter how shabbily he is dressed, he never looks like a gentleman," Lady Glasnamara had once said when the personality of Bernard Mott was being discussed.

The people who heard her had laughed slightly, and it was only after a pause that one of them said:

"Isn't it the aim of a socialist leader to appear as unlike a gentlemen as possible?"

Then some one else had said:

"Haven't we all become socialists—more or less? Does any one every refer to a man as a gentleman nowadays?"

"We don't; we prefer accuracy to convention," remarked a very young woman who had once written a book.

"Quite so; but you all understood what I meant, and agree with me," said Lady Glasnamara.

"We do, we do!" came the chorus, and then they went on to talk of the toque—the new toque, the one with the saucy little twist over the ear. This was a more important topic than the flannel shirt of Bernard Mott.

Rosamund, who had been one of the chorus upon that occasion, and had expressed her opinion pretty freely in regard to the toque, had remained silent while modern socialism was being discussed. But when driving home by the side of her mother she said:

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"My dear mother, you hit the nail on the head when you said that about Bernard Mott."

"I detest the fellow," said Lady Glasnamara. "But I was not unkind to him; in fact, I feel that I was complimentary rather than otherwise to him; you see, his boast is that he is a socialist; he would be angry if you called him a gentleman."

"Of course," acquiesced her daughter; but in her own soul she knew that Bernard Mott would not feel hurt if an enemy had made the attempt to calumniate him by calling him a gentleman.

He would have been angry only if some one said that he was gentlemanly, for he knew that to be gentlemanly is to be electroplated, not the sterling metal.

He wished to be thought the sterling metal, but he was morbidly afraid that here and there people might be found to doubt that he was sterling metal.

It was this morbid fear of his that caused him to assume complete indifference to the opinion of the people about him; and he thought that in dressing as he did he was showing how indifferent he was. No one who had any regard for the opinion of society—that society which includes the habitual wearers of silk hats and white linen—would go about in the society months of May and June wearing a soft hat and a flannel shirt, he thought. He was somewhat mortified at first when he found that no one took any notice of the dress—that every one assumed that he was of the flannel-shirt-wearing class. He was more than mortified, however, when, on top of an omnibus one day, a plasterer addressed him as "mate," asking him if he had such a thing as a match about him.

Now, a professional plasterer, looked at across the

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green baize cover of a platform table during a tumbler-grasping pause in a speech, is a figure of importance; no scheme of social federation can afford to exclude the plasterer; his hand may be grasped—as a matter of fact, it must be—by any orator who has sipped from the tumbler of the platform table to derive fluency for the denunciation of society as at present organised; but the plasterer assuming, on the roof of an omnibus, a more than platform equality with a stranger sitting on the garden seat in front of him, may, in certain conditions, be regarded as offensive.

At any rate, Bernard Mott was more than offended; he was annoyed. He felt himself flushing, as if he had met with an indignity of a very gross type, and he had a painful consciousness that all the people on the garden chairs behind him were smiling and nudging one another at the joke—the people on the top of an omnibus are very keen to see a joke; their horizon is, so to speak, widened—of the plasterer's familiarity.

This reflection caused the angry flush on his face to increase; and when he felt the plasterer's hand upon his shoulder while he repeated the inquiry respecting the match, Bernard Mott jerked his shoulder out of reach of the gritty fingers, but still refrained from replying to the man. He thought that he would be doing wisely in assuming that the man was drunk. Then he heard some one say, "Want a match? 'ere y'are." A growl of thanks came from the plasterer, and after a due interval, a burst of noisome tobacco smoke.

The plasterer was not even sarcastically abusive;

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Mott, the socialist, looked for some broad sarcasm, at least, but instead of this he heard the man discuss with equanimity with the other who had accommodated him the congested traffic and the admirable way in which the police discharged their duty in controlling it. The other man was not so sure that the police understood their business, and then Mr. Mott descended to the street without receiving a glance from the plasterer.

He made up his mind that he would travel as seldom as possible on the top of an omnibus; he had long ago given up the third class of the underground.

He had never told any one of the liberty taken by the gritty man in addressing him as "mate." He had an uneasy feeling that his resentment of such a familiarity would be misinterpreted by some people. He had a notion that here and there some one might be found ready to ask him if it was consistent with the principles of social equality which he had formulated on many platforms to resent the form of address adopted by the plasterer—yes, he had had a good deal of experience of people putting elementary questions to him, and fancying that they had overthrown socialism because their questions could not be answered by "yes" or a "no."

He continued to wear his flannel shirts and his soft hats and to discard gloves; he felt sure that people would ask who he was when they saw him in this attire, and sometimes people did so. Thus it was that the cult of the flannel shirt was not altogether in vain.

He was thirty years of age, and still he was a socialist. He saw no reason to go back upon the

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tenets of the creed which he had accepted—after due thought—eight years before. His creed had been a good friend to him. He meant it to be a good friend to him. That was why he had accepted it. It offered him an excellent opportunity of becoming known in the world, and that was his dream when he sat down to write poetry at the age of sixteen in a cold bedroom. He had suffered the cold of the bedroom, the abuse of his father, and the frank ridicule of his two brothers because of this consuming passion of his to become known in the world. He thought that, on the whole, the composition of poetry constituted the most legitimate channel to fame. There was Burns, for instance. Few people in the world had attained to his position among the famous ones; and yet his reputation rested upon, practically, half a dozen songs. And Byron—what had Byron done that was worth remembering except “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage”?

At that time he had read only those poets whose works could be presented—some of them in expurgated editions—as school prizes. Pope, Scott, Burns, Milton, Cowper, and another called Henry Kirke White. The last named became his favourite, not altogether by reason of the excellence of the poetry which he wrote, but because his father was a butcher. Bernard Mott’s father was not a butcher; he was the proprietor of a ham and beef shop in North London, and he was also a strict Methodist.

For both these reasons he discouraged by all the means at his command his son’s ambition. He had done very well for himself, and he was anxious that his son Bernard, being the eldest of the family,

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should, by taking up the business when his father laid it down, do well for himself also. He ridiculed his son's aspirations. Did he want to be known in the world? Well, would not the business make him known? Was there any one in North London of the working classes—the classes who could afford to buy cooked ham and beef, hating the trouble of cooking for themselves—was there any one who had not heard of Mott? No son of Jonah Mott need talk about making a name for himself. His father had made a name not merely for himself, but for his whole family. No name was more respected than Mott, and if his eldest son—

But his eldest son's ambition was not to be respected. People only respect men who possess no quality to arouse admiration. Judges and aldermen and schoolmasters and tradesmen, who do not advertise are the sort of men who are respected, and Bernard Mott's ambition was not to become as one of these.

What he aimed at was admiration, and what made him so restless was his uncertainty in what direction lay his opportunity of securing it at the least cost to himself. He had never asked his father to allow him to go to a university. He felt that a university was one of the commonplaces of life. It meant drudgery—the servitude of scholarship, which he held no better than the servitude of the counter and the till. He felt that he had genius, and every one knows that genius may be quenched if an attempt is made to wed it to scholarship. The union of genius and scholarship is a *mariage de convenance*, usually followed by disaster, or, worse, by commonplaceness.

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No, he would not allow himself to be subjected to the soul-cramping influences of book-learning, and he would be pointed out as the greatest living poet before he was eighteen. So for a year or two he wrote his verses in imitation first of Pope, whose father was a hosier, or something of that sort; then of Henry Kirke White, whose father was a butcher; and later, of one Keats, whose father kept a livery stable.

He reached the age of eighteen without once being pointed out as the greatest living poet. But in one respect he was fortunate: no newspaper or magazine to which he sent his verses ever printed them; consequently no one outside his own household could know how bad they were.

When he was eighteen he came to the conclusion that the age was not a poetical one.

But what sort of an age was it?

That was the question which he set himself to answer. He felt that he had only to find the answer to have all his ambitions realised. He had ample confidence in his own ability to suit himself to the requirements of the age—to become the world's admiration; the only point upon which he was uncertain was in regard to the course he should adopt to cause all eyes to be turned towards him.

That was how he lived for some time in great uneasiness and in complete idleness. He had heard that genius has occasional intervals of inoperativeness, and found that these intervals were most congenial with his temperament. He took long walks, after rising late in the day, and he considered that he was doing right in allowing his hair to grow very long behind.

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He had serious thoughts of becoming an atheist.

This was when there was a boom, so to speak, in atheism—when a man of enormous incompetence was hurled by the officials of the House of Commons into prominence because he avowed his atheism.

He began to sneer at the story of the deluge; and then his father kicked him out of the house. Mr. Jonah Mott was an austere man and a good Methodist. He was only irritated when his eldest son spent his time writing poetry—the poor man took it for granted that what his son wrote was poetry; he was only disappointed when his son refused to allow himself to become wealthy through attending to business; but he knew how to act when his son pretended to disbelieve the Bible. It was this promptness in making up his mind how to act in an emergency, and then acting, that made Jonah Mott a rich and highly respected man.

When Bernard Mott picked himself up on the doorstep—for he had been literally and not figuratively kicked out of the house—he had certainly a greater respect for his father than he had ever had before. Every natural instinct had not been crushed out of him by his affectation, and it is an impulse of our animal nature that causes us to respect a man who knows how to kick, and kicks strongly. It is the merest affectation to have a regard for a man who only reasons when he has the power to kick.

Bernard Mott made up his mind that he must try to become famous through another channel than avowed atheism, and upon giving his father an assurance to this effect he was once more admitted to the family circle. He had passed a few days at the house

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of his brother-in-law, the assistant manager of a small brewery; and though at first he felt all the fierce joy of being persecuted for his principles, and declared with great vehemence that he would never enter his father's house again, but would die sooner than abate one jot of his belief, yet when his brother-in-law explained to him, with an exactitude that carried a certain amount of weight with it, that he could not remain as his sister's guest longer than a week, he saw his way to give his father the assurance that he desired, and he returned to his home.

The day after his return his father told him that he should no longer be maintained in idleness; he must work for his living, just as if he was an ordinary man.

CHAPTER IX

The interview which Bernard Mott had with his father followed his father's declaration that he must work. That was his father's way. He said that a thing must be done, and then he listened to the grumbling of those who were affected by his decision. Their grumbling in no way altered his decision. The son explained that he was in no way fitted for anything so ordinary as earning a living for himself.

"How can you tell till you've tried?" the father asked, his square jaw protruding and his unshaved upper lip becoming deeper than ever.

He went on then to tell his son that of late he had had some misgivings as to the righteousness of the course he had adopted in regard to his eldest born. It had been impressed upon him that he had been too indulgent. Idleness he had always believed to be the worst condition for any young man to live in, and yet—

"I have not been idling; I have been thinking—thinking," said the eldest born.

"And what have you to show for all your thinking?" the father inquired.

"The mind is trained by thought—oh, you cannot understand," said Bernard.

"The mind is trained by thought, and yet after all these years of thought you haven't trained your mind enough to be able to make me understand a simple

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thing," remarked the father. "So you'll have to work. Will you come into the shop?"

"Never!" cried the son. "I hate it—I loathe the smell of it."

"Then I'll not press you. What do you say to soft goods; I have a thousand shares in Musgrove's Stores, I can get you a berth there to-morrow. In five years you may become a shop-walker, if you're careful about your figure and practice a smile."

(He gave a florid imitation of the smile which he suggested was essential to success as a shop-walker.)

Bernard scowled.

"I a shop-walker! I!" he cried, indignantly.

"After five or six years, maybe; not now. You're not good enough for the post as you are. It needs tact—and the smile."

"I would rather starve. Why should you insult me?"

"If you think that there's any insult in being told to work, you've spent your years of thought very badly, my lad. Anyhow, insult or no insult, you'll have to tackle to and become like other people."

Bernard raged and wept—actually and not figuratively; and on that day week he went to his work as a clerk in the brewery which his brother-in-law under-managed.

His work he considered drudgery. He did it badly. Every day he made mistakes that would have, humiliated the charwoman's boy. They did not humiliate him. They only caused him to think more highly of himself. He felt that Keats would have been a failure as a brewer's clerk, just as Burns was a failure as a gauger.

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He was twenty-two when he went one evening to a lecture on the Rights of Humanity, delivered by a well-known man who called himself a socialist. He left the hall with his heart and his mind full of the sublime phrases of the lecturer. He perceived in a moment that this was what he had been yearning for all his life—this feverish, panting, strident production of phrases, followed by the feverish, panting, strident yells of applause, stamping of feet, hot breath that seemed to come in waves. That was what he had longed for all his life.

And it was so true!

Everything that the man said struck bed-rock, as it were. Every sentence reached the heart—the great, strong heart of the people; the rhythm of the man's phrases pulsed with the great pulsating heart of his hearers. They could not but applaud. They would have been something less than human if they had failed to batter the backs of the chairs and to dig at the flooring with their sticks and umbrellas; for the message which was spoken from behind the green baize of the table, and punctuated—when the applause came—with draughts of water from a tumbler, was a message of joy, a message of good things to come, a message of peace to the world. Bernard Mott knew that the man was right, because he spoke what had been for years in Bernard Mott's heart. When the man talked of equality, Bernard felt that he was the man's equal. He felt that the man was no greater than he, for he was simply giving expression to the thoughts, the aspirations, the dreams which all along had been in his, Bernard's, own heart. He felt as the man went on, that he was in the man's

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place, speaking all that was in his heart to the eager, heavy-breathing men in the body of the hall; and this feeling was of itself a great joy to him—it tended more strongly still to the realisation of that doctrine of equality which was being formulated on the platform.

When the meeting broke up, and the tradesmen's clerks and artisans out of employment who formed the audience had left the hall, Bernard Mott waited at the door in the side street through which the half-dozen men who had been on the platform were to come, and when the lecturer appeared he put out his hand to him with an eagerness that had something of fierceness in it. The lecturer returned his grasp very graciously.

"The truth—the regenerating truth! I have heard it to-night for the first time," cried Bernard.

"But you have had it in your heart—deep down in your heart, my brother," said the lecturer—he had once been a young man himself.

"That's it, that's just it," cried Bernard. (The lecturer thought that it was.) "Yes, it has been in my heart for years. I might have been you, speaking just what I have felt for years."

The lecturer smiled. The three committeemen, who were anxious to get him out to the cab which was to convey them to a socialist supper, made a move. The lecturer did not fail to notice this; he nodded to the youth who was keeping them from their supper.

"I'm so pleased. We shall meet again," he remarked, taking a step towards the cab.

"You must join us," said one of the committeemen, looking over his shoulder.

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"Join you?" said Bernard, inquiringly.

"Yes—the Brotherhood of Reason; here's our book; the list is at the end. We'll be glad to enroll you. Good-night."

Bernard found himself standing alone on the pavement with a small tract in his hand. He remained on the spot for several minutes, and then, with a sigh, he walked to his home.

He lay awake half the night, as a lover who has just been accepted may do. He felt that he had found what he had been yearning for through the long years. He had found a voice of sympathy—above all, he had found out that he wanted to be a socialist leader.

He became one within a year. It seemed strange to him that he had not been aware all along that the only gift which he possessed was that of an orator. He could not understand how it was that he had lived for so many years in ignorance of his own powers. But after he made his first appearance before an audience—he was only moving a vote of thanks to the lecturer—he knew what his own powers were. The man who does not know what he is going to say when he rises, and who sits down having stirred his audience deeply, but leaving them unable to tell what he has talked about, is an orator.

Bernard Mott was an orator.

The sound of his voice hypnotised his hearers, and they yelled out their applause just as he wished them to do. He got more applause than the lecturer received,—a tried and trusted friend of many years' standing,—and the next morning he arrived at the brewery half an hour late, and made so many mistakes

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in the course of the day that the head of the firm sent for him.

No, he had no explanation to offer in regard to his carelessness, he said, nor could he see what right the head of the firm had to call him to account for his carelessness. Men were not machines, he asserted with some vehemence; on the contrary, they were the integral parts of that God-created organism, humanity. God had created humanity, man had created the classes. He then ventured to assure the head of the firm that he had no more right to demand an explanation from one of his fellow-men, who was also his brother and his equal, than the humblest of his fellow-men had to demand an explanation from him.

The head of the firm was at first astonished; but when Bernard Mott began to exercise his new-found power, and to let loose the flood-gates of his long pent-up oratory, the employer gazed at him for a moment, and then quietly picked up a sheaf of letters, newly typewritten and only awaiting his perusal and signature. He had read and signed five before the orator in front of him had ceased talking. Then he signed the sixth letter and looked up.

"Have you quite finished?" he asked, blandly.

"I have told you the truth, though you may never have heard it before," said Bernard. "The day is coming when such as you—"

The employer had pressed the button of his gong, and the porter with the tall silk hat—the firm was a high-class one—entered the room, removing his hat when he passed the door.

"Show that idiot into the street, Spencer, and if

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he ever attempts to enter the brewery kick him into the gutter," said the employer, with the utmost mildness.

"Yessir," said the porter.

Bernard's face was blazing. The head of the firm signed the seventh letter.

"This way," said the porter.

"You may stay at home for a month," said Jonah Mott to his son when the latter had explained to him—not without pride—that he had told the employer some great truths respecting humanity. "Yes; just one month; then you will have to shift for yourself. You understand—just one month!"

But it so happened that Mr. Mott was the first to leave the house. He was found dead in his bed on the fourth morning after he had listened to his son's explanations of how he had managed to return from the brewery at four instead of seven.

It was found that Mr. Mott had made a little fortune through the attention he had given to his business. The sum which was available for distribution in accordance with the terms of his will amounted to £18,000. He bequeathed £2,000 to some mission in connection with his church, and the remainder in equal portions to his daughter, the wife of the under-manager of the brewery, and his two younger sons. To his eldest son he left, in the hands of trustees, a sum sufficient to yield him an income of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, to be paid quarterly.

People who discussed the provisions of the will said that Jonah Mott was a shrewd man, even for a Methodist, and that he knew his sons. The two younger were known to be steady chaps, inheriting

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their father's shrewdness as well as his money; but Bernard—and they shook their heads.

Before two years had passed the two steady and shrewd young Motts had dissipated every penny that had been left to them, and the erratic eldest son was supporting his position as a leading socialist reformer on three pounds a week. He had even offered himself as a candidate for Parliament for a certain division, and though he failed to win the seat, being defeated by five thousand votes, still it was generally acknowledged in socialist circles that he had made a good fight for it, and his position as a leader—a labour leader he was termed—was greatly strengthened.

It was only in North London, where his early life was known, that people put their tongues in their cheeks when the name of "Bernard Mott, the labour leader," appeared in print. The idea of a man who had never done a day's honest work in his life posing and being accepted as a labour leader struck the people of at least one district in North London as being rather funny—and this fact proved that they knew very little about other labour leaders.

However, Bernard Mott did not go to North London for his critics, and he was soon in a position to be indulgent to the people who talked of his early life. He was certainly as much a leader of men as a bell-wether is a leader of sheep, and his influence was scientifically the same. The sound of his voice was to his hearers as the sound of the bell is to the followers of the bell-wether. He quickly acquired all the tricks of the orator, but it is doubtful if their exercise added anything to the effect of his speeches.

He was a born orator, some people said.

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To be a born orator is to be a born humbug, others were ready to affirm.

These were, of course, the people who did not believe in Bernard Mott; and they were mainly the people who had not heard him speak in public.

And then there came a day when every one in England was talking about Bernard Mott, and when every newspaper with machinery capable of printing from stereo blocks contained a portrait of him in his flannel shirt and tossed hair—the tossed hair came out very well in the stereo block.

Bernard Mott became famous.

Some people said that he became infamous.

Others asked where was the difference nowadays.

CHAPTER X

It was undoubtedly a bold stroke on the part of the socialist leader, Bernard Mott, to attend that meeting in St. James's Hall, and to move an amendment to the resolution proposed by the bishop, although the noble chairman had ruled him out of order. If he had failed, he would have failed badly; he would have been regarded as a common brawler; and it required a large amount of tact on his part—some people called it impudence—to enable him to be successful.

The object of the meeting was to protest against the treatment of the Russian prisoners in Siberia, and the bishop who had moved the first resolution had just sat down. He had not been very fluent, nor had he been wholly intelligible. Some minutes had actually elapsed before people began to be aware that a good-looking and very modest young man, wearing a flannel shirt, was addressing the meeting, begging permission as a representative of a large and most important class of Englishmen to express his cordial agreement with the tone of the resolution which had been so ably proposed by one of the ornaments of the great English Church. Then the noble chairman, having become aware of the fact that the speaker was not one of the men whose names were on the paper before him, began to be uneasy. The honorary secretary was shocked, the bishop was scandalised.

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But Bernard Mott had made considerable progress with his speech before the combined forces on the platform had called him to order. He had managed, very adroitly and under the mask of modesty, to read his amendment to the resolution, which was as follows:

"That this meeting, while offering a protest against the barbarities enacted in Siberia, believes that no government is deserving of the support of this country, which does not accept the responsibility of the well-being of her Majesty's subjects."

He had read this amendment, and had already made some progress with his speech enunciating some of the broadest and least acceptable of his socialist dogmas, when the noble chairman called him to order.

He paid no attention to the ruling of the chair, and he was rapidly exercising his hypnotic powers over the audience, when the chairman's call became more peremptory. Still the orator rushed onward, denouncing the crime of the capitalists and the methods of the millionaire. A whirlwind of scorn of the criminal apathy of the government followed, as the earthquake followed the tempest before the prophet on Mount Horeb; and then the bell of the chairman began to assert itself, and the newspaper reporters were making their hieroglyphics for dear life. The meeting that promised to be a deadly dull one, with only half a column, suddenly developed into a lively one, for when Bernard Mott, finding it impossible to make his voice heard above that of the bell, turned—for the first time—to the chairman, and in a commanding tone and a dramatic gesture told him to lay down the bell on the table, and no longer try to stifle the voice of truth; there followed what the newspapers the next day termed "disorderly proceedings."

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For amid the frantic gestures of the chairman, the shouts of the secretary, and the scandalised executive on the platform, Bernard Mott resumed his speech in a higher key that suited his stronger language. But even the people who attend an afternoon meeting in St. James's Hall can now and again be roused to a point of impatience; and there were cries of "Sit down!" "No Socialism!" "Order, order!" In a second shouts of "Fair play!" "No gag!" "Hear him out!" came from several parts of the hall; for Bernard Mott had taken good care not to come alone to this meeting; and then the "disorderly proceedings" graphically described in the newspapers the next day.

Then there was a perfect babel in the body of the hall, and once a chair was uplifted above the heads of his neighbours by an excited gentleman. At this point, the bishop, shaking his head and uplifting his hands, left the platform; the secretary and the noble chairman consulted together, and the latter was seen to declare the meeting adjourned. Amid cheers from the body of the hall, the platform became deserted.

Only for a few moments, however; for Mr. Bernard Mott quickly found himself in a chair facing the little table and the glass of water—the position was a familiar one for him, and, as usual, he was master of the situation. He restored order and actually put all the original resolutions to the meeting, and carried them unanimously, the first on the list only being altered to give it the tone of a socialistic pronouncement.

It was not surprising that the next day some of the papers described the proceedings as a socialist *coup d'état*, nor was it remarkable that all the honours of a

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special edition, with his name in large letters on the contents boards, were accorded to Bernard Mott within an hour of his triumph in the hall.

And he had achieved a triumph. It did not matter to him that every respectable newspaper referred to his action in the course of a leading article as a piece of impudence; it did not matter to him that here and there he was alluded to as a mob leader; his triumph lay in the fact that he was alluded to. The newspapers, which had previously ignored him and his lectures and his labour-leading, could not afford to ignore him any longer. That was his triumph. It was for this he had yearned from his boyhood—note, notoriety, fame, infamy; no matter what people called his achievement, it remained a fact that could not be altered, a part of the history of the year that could not be erased from the annals of the reign.

And his father had once urged him to take his place in a shop of grease in North London.

And a man who brewed beer had once given orders for him to be thrust into the street!

These were the thoughts which were uppermost in his mind as he walked up and down his room in Bloomsbury, with the newspaper of the day and the special editions of the newspapers of the previous evening scattered about the chairs, the sofa with the broken leg, the table with the veneer peeled off, the carpet stained with the gravy of many chops, the hearth-rug with the roses.

He had been right, and his father had been wrong. And as for the brewer of beer—well, he had got the better of him long ago; but he could not help wondering what the fellow would be willing to pay to the

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newspapers if they consented to print his portrait from a stereo block.

He had conquered the Fate that had condemned him to an ignoble—that is, an obscure existence. He had proved to the world that he was a power—that he was to be reckoned with by the makers of history; he was one of them himself.

Only—

He paused in his rapid strides to and fro, with his head lifted proudly up and his hair tossed. The force of his steps had caused the group of bride's-cake flowers beneath the glass shade (cracked) to tremble on their exposed wires. He glanced round at the evidences of squalor in the room, and that "only" came to him, followed by a long train of thought.

What was the good of fame to him if he was still condemned to live in such a room in the midst of such squalid things? What was the value of it if he was forced to live all his life upon three pounds a week?

At first the thought came to him with the force of an enemy's jibe in his hour of triumph; but then he laughed. The humour of the situation—the deadly humour of the idea of the man about whom all England was talking, the man who had put to rout a bishop and an earl—living in squalid lodgings as if he were nothing better than a tradesman's clerk, forced that bitter laugh from him.

His ambition had for its object something beyond a lifetime spent in a Bloomsbury lodging-house. He had arrived at an age when most men feel that fame, unless it brings with it a material advantage, is an empty thing. When he was a boy writing his verses in imitation of Henry Kirke White, it seemed to him

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that fame was quite enough to satisfy him—that there was nothing better than to have one's name in everybody's mouth, and that two pounds a week was wealth.

But now that he was approaching thirty years of age he had begun to think with envy of the men who lived in good houses and had beautifully dressed wives—he had become acquainted with a few such men, and they had asked him to dine with them. (They were mostly members of Parliament, who thought the socialist vote worth angling for at the next general election.) Every time Bernard Mott visited one of these men he returned to his dreary lodgings with a heart full of bitterness.

And now, as he sat among the newspapers that spoke of his triumph—only the most of them called it impudence—he felt more bitterly still at the fate which had decreed that he was to be a great power in the world on three pounds a week.

A few days afterwards, while people were still talking, but in a more subdued way, about Bernard Mott, he got an invitation from Lady Glastonbury, the wife of Sir Hastings Glastonbury, to an "at home" at her house the following week. The card was accompanied by a very pretty note intimating to him the pleasure it would give the writer and her husband if Mr. Bernard Mott would join their circle. Mr. Bernard Mott would, Lady Glastonbury was sure, find some sympathetic thinkers who would, she was convinced, be delighted to meet him under her roof.

This was the first social recognition that his triumph had met with. Socialism was not social. But Lady Glastonbury was; and when Bernard Mott went to her house he found himself in the midst of a group

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of very celebrated people even before he succeeded in reaching the staircase, at the head of which the affable hostess received her guests, with a smile that seemed to him to creak—actually to break, like the gates of society, being thrown open to him.

Of course, for the first hour or so he felt very lonely. Everybody was too busy avoiding the claret cup which stood in big silver bowls on the tables of the dining-room to have a moment to spare to ask him who he was. Lady guests—all except the neophytes—spent all their time avoiding that claret cup. But he quickly adapted himself to his environment and its conditions. He saw that the right thing for a man to do who was a stranger in the midst of strangers was to stand with folded arms and an expression of proud gloom, bordering upon scorn, on his face. His favourite reading had been the novels of the first Lord Lytton, and he had no difficulty in feeling as one of the gloomy and scornful heroes of that type of fiction had felt.

He longed for a cloak.

He fancied that no one was paying any attention to him; but he was mistaken, for in a short time he saw his hostess looking about the drawing-room with a good-looking young fellow by her side. He saw that the young man was endeavouring to steer her to some particular place. She was stupid.

"Are you sure that he is here?" he heard her ask her companion.

"Hush—standing up against the pillar—with tossed hair," he heard the young man reply in a low tone.

"Of course! How stupid of me! I might have known—tossed hair," murmured the hostess; and

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then she went, with an almost girlish eagerness, straight to Bernard Mott.

"Oh, Mr. Mott, it was so good of you to come!" she cried; and once again he was convinced that he heard the creak of her smile. Clearly her smile wanted oiling. "I want you to allow me to present Mr. Barry Joyce to you; he is so anxious to meet you. Mr. Joyce was one of the lights of the Union in his day, and I have heard that you are a great orator, Mr. Mott, and a very shocking person generally—Mr. Joyce, I know, is dreadfully shocking sometimes. Oh, you are sure to get on together."

She slipped away, still smiling, and the two men were left together.

That was the beginning of their friendship, for Barry Joyce, being an Oxford man, with a burning desire to make a name for himself at the Union, and being, moreover, the son of a conservative, had developed strong democratic tendencies. This made his mother grieve in secret, but his father's only complaint was that he "hadn't it strong enough."

Those were Lord Glasnamara's very words.

"He hasn't it strong enough," he said to his wife. "A chap should have it early and strong—like the measles. A chap should have the democratic complaint as early in life as possible, and the attack should be virulent. He should fairly be covered with democratic pimples, and then settle down to be a healthy conservative. Ah, yes! Barry hasn't the democratic measles strong enough."

Perhaps he had not; but at any rate he became a close friend of Bernard Mott, and more than once he had asked Bernard Mott to dine with him—not at his

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club, but at the family mansion in Battenberg Gardens. He had thought of asking him to his club at first; but on reflection he named the family mansion instead. He was not quite certain that the socialist would be a *persona grata* with the members who might be dining there at the same time. A bishop was among the members, and he now and again turned up for dinner, just to keep the wine committee up to their work.

Lady Glasnamara said that really Mr. Bernard Mott behaved quite like a gentleman at dinner, and—what was more important—afterwards.

"I don't think much of him, but I shouldn't like to be so hard on him as all that," said Rosamund.

Lady Glastonbury's reception took place some months before Coralie Randal met Bernard Mott on the terrace of the House of Commons. And two nights later she met him again at a reception given by the same indefatigable hostess.

CHAPTER XI

She did not see him for some time; but he saw her at once, though he did not move from the place where he was standing. If she wished to talk to him, she might come to him. He satisfied himself that he was displaying a proper spirit of independence.

He had to wait for her some time, the fact being that Barry Joyce was discharging very faithfully the duties of a guide for her. He knew a large number of the people who were present, and he was pointing out the celebrities furtively and in whispers. He was foolish enough to fancy that the celebrities would be hurt if they chanced to perceive that he was pointing them out to her. He gave them credit for a virtue which they did not possess. They would only have been hurt if he had not pointed them out.

Coralie said she thought there were enough celebrities in the two drawing-rooms to do for the whole of so small a place as England.

"Yes, quite enough to do for it," said Captain Grafton, putting a strange reflection on the words "do for" which seemed to change the meaning of the phrase somewhat.

"And yet I suppose that all the towns outside London have their celebrities, too," said Coralie.

"Oh, yes; England has its Bostons as well as its New Yorks," said Captain Grafton. "But if you

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take my advice, you'll not touch the claret cup," he added, in a whisper.

"I'll take good care of that," said Barry, noticing the puzzled look that came to Coralie's face. She had not quite mastered the conversational methods of Algý Grafton.

Just then the Green Scandinavian band began to play, and Barry was able to tell her with less irritating reserve the names of some of the people about her. Lady Glastonbury had a marvellous eye for the celebrated, and people said it was really marvellous how few of those she took up she was compelled by the inexorable force of circumstances to drop.

Her Christian anarchist of three years back she had been compelled to relinquish, though it must be admitted that she only did so under extreme pressure, and with the entire consent of the police. The Christian anarchist had been the comet of a season—only one, however; the police took care of that. It was, curiously enough, while he was at one of Lady Glastonbury's receptions that the police visited his lodgings and discovered the recipe of his famous explosive, as well as the facsimile of the bomb which had done such damage the previous week.

This was how it came about that Lady Glastonbury gave up the Christian anarchist.

The police didn't, however.

But his place was taken in her circle by the Irish clergyman who had turned Buddhist. Barry pointed him out to Coralie, and she admired his turban. He wore the turban, of course, because if he had not done so no one would have known that he had turned

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Buddhist. He was so very sincere, his friends said. Yes, that was the worst of it, his enemies said.

He was talking to the celebrated dramatic author who had made a failure at every theatre in London, and more than one in the suburbs. As a natural consequence, every play that he wrote was immediately produced by a manager, and he took a prominent position wherever celebrities were gathered together.

Close at hand there was a refugee. It was said that one British-born subject had known the name of the country from which he was a refugee, but this person was dead. The refugee himself was apparently unable to give any information on the subject; and it was this atmosphere of mystery surrounding him that caused him to be looked upon with interest by his fellow guests.

People said that he was the only professional refugee alive in England. To be sure, it was rumoured that another had been seen in Leicester Square, but the report was discredited by the best informed naturalists. It was, however, assumed by Lady Glastonbury's guests that whatever country had got rid of her refugee that country was a fortunate one.

In one corner of the inner drawing-room, in unostentatious guardianship of a decanter and three syphons, stood the bog-trotter poet, engaged in earnest conversation with the critic (Irish) who had declared that he was the greatest living poet, and with the youth (Irish) who had announced that the critic had declared that the bog-trotter was the greatest living poet. They all were very happy together, and they took it for granted that they were being watched and admired by the rest of the company.

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They were shortly afterwards joined by the leading exponent of the scorbutic in art, who had recently been discovered by the editor of a magazine. The magazine only survived for four months the black-and-white monstrosities introduced by the artist, though it was said to enjoy a considerable vogue at the hospitals.

The actress who was the accepted exponent of the cadaverous in stage-craft was discussing the subtleties of the Kamschatkan Shakespeare with the critic who had translated the works of the Kamschatkan Shakespeare. All these people had names. They had also friends, and it was the duty of these friends—they were all associated with newspapers—to keep their names constantly before the readers of those newspapers.

The greater number of the names mentioned by Barry Joyce, supplemented by Algy Grafton, for the information of Coralie, were unknown to her—only a few of them had crossed the Atlantic.

"I feel quite ashamed not to be intimate with them all," she said. "They are all celebrated on this side, are they not?"

"Yes; they are all—notorious, that is the word I was looking for," said Captain Grafton. "Yes, it requires a good eye to prevent one from mistaking the phosphorescence around a stale Finnan haddie for the aureole of a saint," he added, with a touch of vulgarity that gave a flavour to his phrases, as Bombay duck gives a flavour to some forms of curry, though it is a very shocking thing when considered under the microscope.

It was when Barry was telling her of the feats per-

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formed by the great George Wareham, the cricketer, who had been invited by Lady Glastonbury to her "at home" on his making his famous score of 320, not out, at Lord's, he noticed that she was not paying attention to him. She was looking across the room with interest in her eyes, and a slight flush on her fair face.

"Oh, I didn't know that Mott was to be here," said Barry; he perceived it was at Bernard Mott she was looking. "But it was here I first met him—yes, he was standing at that very pillar, with his arms folded, just as he is now. I think we should speak to him, if you don't mind. He looks a bit lonely, poor chap. He does not know any one here."

"And no one here seems to know him," said Coralie, with more than suggestion of scorn in her voice. "I suppose it takes people some time to know who are the greatest among them."

"They will all have to reckon with Bernard Mott before long," said Barry. "He will not always be so isolated as he seems just now, poor chap."

They were crushing their way to him, and he saw them in the act, but made no move. It should not be in the power of any one to say that he was making advances to the rich American girl—he had heard that she was rich; he had been sufficiently interested in her to make inquiries on this subject, an incident which shows that he had a business side to his character.

She had come to him.

"You did not expect to see me here, Miss Randal," he said, with a little smile—the smile of the Lord Chief Justice who has been caught playing horses with

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his grandchildren. "If any one had told me a year ago that I should become one of Lady Glastonbury's visitors, I would have been hurt—no, perhaps only amused. And yet now—well, I have found mixing in society, as it is called, very useful to me. One must make some sacrifices for the sake of experience."

"The fact is that Mr. Mott comes here as a spy, Miss Randal," said Barry. "He is busy finding out all the weak points in the defences of society."

"I confess it—I confess it," said Mott, quite pleasantly. He had even caught the mannerism of the modern badinage of society. "I am playing the part of a spy."

"You do not need a microscope for your discoveries, Mr. Mott," remarked Coralie. "Even within the fortnight that I have been in England I have seen how curious a thing is this society, as it is called."

"That is precisely what it is—curious—infinately curious," said he. "I don't think that it is dangerous for thinkers such as you and workers such as I to come here to see it and wonder. We can laugh at the smallness of the end which they have in view—the pettiness of the jealousies, the absurdities of the precedencies, the empty ambitions of mothers for their daughters, of daughters for their dresses. Ah, I have seen it all—you have seen it all, too, Miss Randal, and we can laugh in a duet."

She proved that he spoke the truth; but her laugh was a good deal less laboured than his. But then she became grave all the sooner.

"A mockery—a mockery. The sadness of it all!" she murmured, her voice being in tone like a distant echo of his.

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"Ah, the sadness of it all," he repeated; and now it was his voice that suggested the echo. But he soon changed its tone; it became masterful once again, with the modulation into another key. "Society, after all, is nothing but a struggle for life, conducted in kid gloves. If the animals in the jungle could agree to fight with sheathed claws, they also might claim to be in society."

"Could anything be more apt?" said Barry. "I like that notion—in kid gloves, sheathed claws! Mott, you have hit it off exactly—you usually do. He says what we feel, Miss Randal—that is where the power of the man comes in."

The man waved his hand in graceful depreciation of the flattery. Coralie saw how gracefully intolerant he was of flattery. And yet she had frequently heard of the vanity of born orators. One of his race, at least, was slandered, she felt.

He saw that she felt this; he wondered if he could detect also some measure of appreciation on her part of the graceful compliment paid to him by Barry. He had found out that Miss Randal's father was a millionaire, and he knew that Barry Joyce was the heir to an Irish landlord.

"Where is it all to end?" asked Coralie, somewhat sadly.

"All what?" said Barry.

"All this—this—this," said she with a little wave of her hand round the chatterers, the poseurs, the pretenders of the Glastonbury circle.

"We can go at any time you please; we have to go on to the Whitcomb's," replied the dense Barry.

"I am afraid that you have assigned too narrow a

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limit to Miss Randal's question, Joyce," said Bernard. (What would his father have thought if any one had told him that his son would one day be on terms of such equality with the son of a peer?) "I think I am right in assuming that you meant to ask, Miss Randal, where will this empty parade known as society give place to something nobler—stronger—more enduring."

"That is what I meant," said she. "Can you answer me, Mr. Mott?"

"Who can answer you?" he cried. "Voices have been crying for ages, 'How long, O Lord—how long?' It is the *vox clamantis* that has sounded down the long empty echoing halls of time. How long are the people who walk in darkness to continue without the light? How long are the people who were meant to be brothers to continue waiting for the chance to spring at each other's throats like beasts of the jungle? Look around you, here in this very room. You have seen, as I have seen, that beneath this mask of friendliness—nay, of friendship, which every face wears, there is the gall of bitterness. I saw a man go up to another just now and shake him by the hand, offering him hearty congratulations on the success of his new play. Ah, I knew that beneath that smiling exterior there was a heart full of bitterness. I heard a lady call another's frock 'adorable'—that was her word—'adorable.' Alas! I knew but too well that that same girl was ready to tear into shreds, not only the garment worn by the other, but also her reputation."

"Is it possible that it is so paltry—so bad—so cruel as that?" cried Coralie.

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The man smiled sadly—bitterly—as one who could, if he would, enlighten her—as one who, if he had the heart, could tell her of all the evil that he had seen done beneath the sun. And then he shook his head in graceful melancholy at the thought that it had been laid upon him to expose the machinations of society. It did not strike Coralie as odd that this man should have laid on himself the sacred burden of exposing the hollowness of society, considering that he had only been acquainted with the object of his denunciation for a few months. Coralie did not know anything of the birth and adolescence of Mr. Mott. She was aware only of his afflorescence.

“Believe me, it is all hollow—hollow,” he said. “I have seen it, I have felt it. But let us take courage. Let us remember that it is because we have seen what we have seen, and known what we have known, it is laid on us to lead society into a better way. “It is laid on us to teach these poor creatures”—he swept his hand in the direction of a group that consisted of a judge and the one great South African exploiter, and the proprietor of a great newspaper—“these poor creatures that there is something higher, nobler, truer than this life which they are living, and which, alas! they are content to live.”

His fervent phrases were interrupted by a buzz in which all the other guests that thronged the drawing-rooms seemed to take part. They were all looking in one direction, and Coralie involuntarily found her eyes turning in the same direction.

In another moment there entered the room a tall man with a sun-baked face and eyes of deadly resolution looking out beneath heavy brows—a man with a

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moustache that even Coralie recognised, having seen it portrayed in every shop window in London, from the window of the maker of cigarettes to the window of the seller of chocolate creams in fancy boxes.

"It is General Firebrace," she cried, forgetting herself in the excitement of seeing the conqueror of the Sahara.

CHAPTER XII

Coralie, for some reason or other, quite forgot herself. She allowed herself to fall to the level of all the other guests of Lady Glastonbury, who were gazing at the man of war as he entered the room and made straight for Algy Grafton, who was talking to another man of the Omdurman "crowd." She saw the great General lay his hand on Algy's shoulder while he made inquiries regarding the foot that had been lamed in a mysterious way in an encounter the details of which had not appeared in the papers. .

For some moments every one continued looking at the little group of brown men. Coralie never took her eyes off them. The Omdurman crowd were giving no one else in the room a chance. No one else in the room seemed to want a chance. They were content to take their places as the others. The room was divided in the Omdurman crowd and the others. Coralie forgot the others. She forgot even the seer who had been seeing and telling her what he had seen. What chance had Nathan the seer when Joab the man of war was clanking about on his return from the slaughter of the Philistines?

But then, of course, Coralie Randal was persuaded that she was not as other girls, who, for some reason or some instinct, are ready to rush a mile out of their way, leaving poets and prophets and poseurs with

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complete indifference behind them, for the sake of being able to stare at a man of war.

Had not Coralie been shocked when her friend Rosamund Joyce confessed that she was fond of reading about fighting?

And yet here she was, gazing at the great fighting man, and making no attempt to conceal her admiration for him.

And then the fighting man crossed the room to where the great exploiter of Southern Africa was standing in eager conversation with a diplomatist who had just been gazetted to a state from which great things were hoped. The great exploiter did not find much joy in attending such functions as those given by Lady Glastonbury, but as that astute hostess had told him that the victorious General would be at her house, he had accepted her invitation. It was understood that the victorious General detested such forms of entertainment as Lady Glastonbury provided for her guests; but having been assured by her that the great exploiter would be present, he had promised to appear also. He had a huge admiration of the great exploiter.

The meeting of the two men in this drawing-room made the occasion historic. There was an Ex-Prime Minister in one of the rooms, but no one looked at him. Ex-Prime Ministers are poor sort of things; but even present Prime Ministers will not be stared at if there is in the room a victorious General or a man who has discovered a new world. So strong is even the remnant of an ancient instinct among a civilised community.

There they stood in a corner of the room—the two

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great Powers of an overcrowded century. The two men who had proved themselves to be men. And between them there was a larger and truer feeling of poetry than there was among the aggregation of verse-making poets—the lesser breed—to be found, disguised by long hair and exposed necks, in Lady Glastonbury's drawing-rooms. And between them there was more of the true spirit of the seer than might be found in the aggregation of the professors of seercraft.

It was, curiously enough, at this moment Coralie had her first feeling of being in England. She had been generally disappointed with England hitherto. The review of the guards had not impressed her. The House of Commons had seemed decrepid in her eyes—the mother of Parliaments might have been a grandmother, so senile did it appear. As for Westminster Bridge—well, no one could tell her whether it was the Westminster Bridge of Wordsworth's sonnet, or another. But when she looked across the room and saw the General shaking hands with the exploiter she had a thrill that told her she had reached England at last—England that had made America and India and Australia and Africa, north and south; England, that had been strong enough and conscious enough of her own strength to march forward and to undertake the task from which other nations had shrunk—the task of rescuing ancient states from ancient barbarism and modern tyranny.

All that Coralie felt at that moment found expression in her whisper—her involuntary whisper of the word,

“England.”

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Some moments had passed before she became aware of the fact that Bernard Mott was speaking. What was he saying? Did it matter much?

"Butchers both. They are the exponents of a force of savagery which we shall make obsolete in a few years more or less. People who call themselves civilised cheer them in the streets and come here to gaze at them, forgetting that it is the success of such-like men that has retarded the advance of civilisation in its highest form, which is socialism, for many years."

For a moment Coralie was conscious of receiving a little shock. Then she turned her eyes upon the grave, grieved face of Mr. Mott. Barry Joyce had been drawn away by a friend who wanted to ask him something about a pony which he was to ride at Ranelagh—and she felt that she had been weak, sadly weak, in allowing herself to be allured into a moment's admiration of the shedders of blood. It was a part of the power of Bernard Mott to make her feel, without argument and without reason, all that he wanted her to feel, and that in a moment, too.

"You have had admiration—some admiration—for such men," he said, keeping his eyes fixed upon hers. There was still a grieved expression on his face, but it was only the pained look that a fond parent wears when his child has unwittingly done wrong.

"I am afraid that—that—oh, you see, I did not think," said she, quite apologetically.

"No, you did not think—few people think about such matters; they follow because some lead," said he. "But you, Miss Randal—you are capable of thought. Your face is the face of a thinker; more:

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it is a face that makes men think. It has made me think."

There was nothing of the pewter clink of flattery in his tone. He was speaking with critical coldness.

"Ah," she said, "if I had but thought for a moment; but I was startled when those two men came together. For a moment it seemed to me—well, I have read a great deal about England and Englishmen as I have imagined them. But now I see—I think I see—war should be impossible."

"War would be impossible if we had our way," said he. "And slowly but surely we are becoming articulate. They cannot ignore us forever. They cannot slight us when we have shown them that we have cast aside our old policy of concession and conciliation. I inaugurated the policy of aggression when I rose at the Siberian meeting and drove the chairman and his strongest henchmen from the hall. You heard of it?"

Coralie was compelled to admit that she had not heard of it. She did so with some feeling of shame in her heart. When the bog-trotter poet quoted a verse of his to a captive listener, and asked him (or her) if she (or he) remembered how the poem went on, he (or she) could not but feel ashamed to be compelled to reply in a modified negation. In which case the bog-trotter poet would have smiled—he occasionally did smile in a sickly way that somehow suggested epilepsy.

But Bernard Mott did not smile on hearing the girl's confession. He only gazed at her with something of amazement in his eyes. Several moments had passed before he said, in a low voice:

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"And yet you were ready to give me your hand as a friend, a comrade, without being aware of what I had done? You had not even heard Barry Joyce speak of me?"

"They all spoke of so many people, and I was meeting so many people, I really failed to remember any name," she replied.

"He may not have mentioned my name," said Mr. Mott. "If he had mentioned my name, I feel sure that you would have remembered it. But Barry—ah, poor Barry! I fear for him. Poor Barry! he is weak. But indeed he means well. Ah, Miss Randal, whatever he may say or do, let nothing persuade you to the contrary. Think of the snare of being heir to a peerage—an Irish peerage, with very little money attached to the position. You must not be led to blame poor Barry if the constant prompting of his family—ah, there are, I know, some men, the annals of the aristocracy make the fact plain, who think that their duty to their family compels them to make a mercenary marriage."

"I did not hear that he was going to be married," said Coralie, somewhat quickly. "Is he going to sell himself—to make a mockery of the most sacred—"

"H'sh, h'sh,—" whispered Mr. Mott, raising his finger with some suggestion of playfulness. "H'sh for heaven's sake. You misunderstand me. I have no right to make any suggestion regarding his intentions. But you know in what direction an impoverished family turns its eyes in expectation of deliverance?"

There was a slightly puzzled expression on the girl's face. She wondered if he meant the Jews. She

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had read in articles in newspapers and other works of fiction of the extensive transactions between the effete aristocracy of Great Britain and Hebrew money-lenders.

He saw the puzzled expression on her face.

"The broken-down aristocrat looks across the Atlantic," said he, in a very low voice.

In a second she had flushed—her fair face, the dainty slope of white flesh that her dress left exposed, her arms above her gloves—all had turned exquisitely roseate.

"Pardon me, Miss Randal," he cried in another moment. "Pardon me. I fear that I have frightened you. I have no reason—no right whatever to think, to surmise, suspect, that Barry Joyce would lend himself to any transaction savouring of the marriage mart. Oh, no; he is far too honest for that. Would I have taken him as my right-hand man in the great work to which I have dedicated my life unless I was convinced of his honesty—his sincerity? I can give you my assurance that he is good at heart, and if he were only a little stronger—a little more independent of his family, especially his sister, who, I am afraid, sways him greatly, though she is—well, only a girl—nothing more, I assure you—ah, yes, if he were only strong, I might be able to assure you positively that he would not yield to the persuasion of the people who surround him. Poor Barry! But he is fast learning the great truth. I have hopes—"

"So far as I am concerned—" began Coralie.

He raised his hand and his eyes communicated a warning to her.

A look of impatience flashed to her face as Rosa-

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mund came up with her mother. The latter greeted Bernard with effusion—that sort of effusion which people in her position show towards persons who, though having a reputation for cleverness, are not quite—not quite, you know—well, not quite at home.

“We must be hurrying on, my dear,” said Rosamund to Coralie.

“Oh, yes; we must hurry on. Where is Barry?” said Lady Glasnamara.

Once again Coralie became roseate, without knowing why she assumed that tint. She was sorely tempted to tell Lady Glasnamara that she was not Mr. Barry Joyce’s keeper. She resisted the impulse, however, and Mr. Mott saw the struggle in her face. She merely glanced round the room, saying:

“Do you know if there is a smoking-room in this house? I shouldn’t wonder if he might be found there. Shall I go and inquire?”

CHAPTER XIII

There was a flush in Coralie's voice, so to speak, as well as on her neck, and Rosamund, noticing both, wondered what that odious young man with the tossed hair—no one would have known him to be anything in particular if it had not been for his tossed hair, she thought—could have been saying to her. But Lady Glasnamara only gave a laugh.

"I don't think that Barry would so far forget himself; but you are quite right: he does smoke too much. Most young men do. Luckily he only smokes tobacco."

The last sentence had an enigmatical sound about it. It set Coralie thinking.

What on earth could Lady Glasnamara mean by suggesting that it was possible to smoke something besides tobacco?

She was so startled by the enigmatical possibilities of the phrase she could not think of a second reply to make to Lady Glasnamara; so that Lady Glasnamara felt that she had not uttered that enigmatical sentence in vain.

"We must hurry on, Coralie," she whispered. "We shall catch Lady Glastonbury on the stairs. Good-night, Mr. Mott. If you should chance to see my son, will you have the goodness to tell him that we have gone on?"

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"I will do so," Mott said, bowing, but not so as to compromise his self-respect, as the party of three moved away.

He looked after them. He had plenty of time to think over that flush which had overspread the girl's face, and had even tinged her voice—but that was when it had made its second appearance.

She had flushed first at a suggestion which he had made—delicately, he thought; subtly, he felt assured—respecting Barry*Joyce; secondly, at the mention of Barry's name by his mother.

He wondered what conclusion he should come to from the fact of Coralie having become roseate. Had she actually fallen in love with Barry Joyce?

That was what he feared, since when Barry had met him a week before he had been led to mention that the reason for his having so little time to devote to the study of socialism was the necessity to go about with a very charming young woman from the States who was visiting his family. He had at that time led Barry on to talk about this girl. Barry had not needed much persuasion in this direction, but had hastened to say that the girl was a most interesting one.

Bernard Mott did not know very much about girls and men; but he knew enough to be aware of the fact that when a man talks of a woman as being interesting, he means that the girl is interested in him, and he also had an idea that—so primitive are the emotions of young men and maidens—the easiest way for a man to become interesting to a woman is by making love to her.

He wondered if Barry had been making love to that

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lovely American heiress—he felt convinced that she was an heiress—about whom he spoke so enthusiastically.

But when Barry had presented him to the girl, and he had talked to her for some time, he derived the impression that Barry had not made love to her. She had listened to all that he had got to say to her, and he could see that she was impressed: her face had lighted up as he had seen the faces of some of his audiences lighten up beneath the spell woven by his words. She had not allowed her eyes to stray away from him in search after Barry, who had left her side for a while. His observations in this matter had reassured him.

Reassured him—that was the phrase which was in his mind, the point on which he was anxious to be reassured being in regard to the future of Barry only—he had not given much thought to the girl; ~~but~~ he had a suspicion that the son of a peer, however exemplary a republican and socialist he may be when a bachelor, is apt to become a backslider if he marries an American girl with some force of character—and what American girl is without it?

But when he perceived that the American girl was extremely charming—that is to say, extremely impressed by all that he had to say to her respecting his mission as a reformer of the world—even of the inhabitants of the United States—some curious thoughts came to him; and he desired to reassure himself on a few points that had suggested themselves to him. His desire in this respect had been intensified when he had gone to his lodgings and looked round at the genteel squalor of his room.

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Another petal of the floral alabaster of the bride's-cake ornament had been shaken off its wire stem. The door of the room had been left open, and the atmosphere was impregnated with the afternoon chop of the printer's reader who occupied the lower room, and that comestible had not been deficient in grease.

Then it was one of the sofa's bad days. It suffered from rheumatism in one of its legs, and this was one of its bad days. (Every one knows that articles of furniture which have passed the heyday of their youth have their good and their bad days.)

It was also one of the sideboard's bad days—the sideboard with the carved trophies of flowers. It had suffered from gouty eczema for many years, one could see.

It was the atmosphere of the apartment that caused certain ideas, which had previously been strange to him, to fill his mind to the exclusion even of his aims of universal brotherhood. And that was why he now felt more than a mere academic interest in the question of reassurance on the subject of Barry Joyce's future.

He wondered if Barry had adopted the rôle of missionary in the presence of the American girl. He knew that in the eyes of an impressionable girl the missionary is a heroic figure. He had heard from people who were supposed to know a good deal about such matters as girls and their ways—matters which he had hitherto quite disregarded in his considerations of socialism as a power—that young women were constantly in the habit of falling in love with their preceptors. The dancing-master was their favourite—the dancing-master who was looked upon with contempt by the strong-minded and only tolerated by

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the good-natured. Then the drawing-master, the music-master, and even the mathematical master frequently absorbed all the earliest affections of the young girl. But later she was accustomed to transfer her regard to the missionary. The curate of the parish seemed in her eyes to be a heroic figure, because he was a working model, so to speak, of the missionary. And if this was true of the girl in general, it was assuredly doubly true of the American girl in particular.

That was why he wondered if Barry Joyce had, in conversing with Miss Randal, thought it as well to assume the rôle of the man with the mission—as the curate to the socialist movement.

Well, he reflected that in talking to Miss Randal about Barry he had said nothing but what was generous. Everything that he had said had reflected favourably upon Barry. Nay, he had even gone out of his way to make allowances for Barry in case he had already adopted, in respect to the girl, a course which could not but awaken suspicion.

He actually felt that he had been unnecessarily generous in his references to Barry. He wondered where another man equally generous could be found. And that was what was in his mind as Barry came up to him with Captain Grafton. He detested Captain Grafton, and was glad that he did not remain by Barry's side.

"I was detained by Tommy Traffles, who had a lot to say about the ponies," said Barry, apologetically. "I suppose my people have gone on."

"They have," replied Bernard. "I wonder if you really have our case at heart."

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The abruptness of this question, apropos of nothing, had rather a startling effect upon Barry.

"Have I really got—my dear Mott, why such a suspicion?" he said, with a laugh.

"I was about to write to you," said Mott, "but I had a notion that I should see you here to-night. I have got a letter from our Executive at Barkstone, in Northumberland, entreating me to send down a good man from headquarters to reorganise the Northern branch of the Brotherhood, in view of the coming election; and I have persuaded the Committee to send you, if you will accept the position."

"Good heavens!" cried Barry. "You take my breath away. What the mischief do I know about organising? I am no more than a neophyte. I am ready to sit at your feet and learn."

"We are the best judges of what you are capable," said Mott. "I have pointed out to my Committee that for several reasons you are likely to be the most acceptable person in the eyes of the Northern branch. You are more likely to impress the people than any man amongst us, though you are, as you say, only on the threshold of socialism as a principle of life. The people around Barkstone have been oppressed for ages by the three great families who have held practically feudal sway over the county. Now if any of us, the ordinary sons of the people, were to go among them, we should create no impression: there is nothing extraordinary in sons of the people banding themselves against tyranny and oppression. But if you, the heir to a peerage, the inheritor of a great name, were to go among them, an impulse would be

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given to the movement that would go far to make success assured."

"I don't think myself that there's much in that," said Barry. "You see, I'm no orator. The Union was all very well, of course; but the Union represents oratory for boys, and oratory for men is quite another bag of potatoes. Besides—" Here he held up his hand some inches from his eyes and examined his nails with some attention, as if their nature and properties were altogether strange to him.

"Besides?—what is your besides?" asked Bernard. He had not failed to notice the peculiar attention given by Barry to the tips of his fingers. "Besides what?" he continued.

"Well, the fact is—yes, I don't think that my people would think it quite courteous on my part to run off in this fashion when we have a guest staying with us from America."

"You have set your hand to the plough," said Bernard, gravely. "If you are not ready to forsake kindred and caste and courtesy for the cause, you would do well to reconsider your position. The question is, will you forsake the principles which in your heart of hearts you know to be the truth, lest people might think that you have failed in some of the ordinary *convenances* of that unhealthy, flabby, unorganised organism known as society?"

"I don't think that this should be regarded as a test case," said Barry. "In ordinary circumstances I should not think twice, but—couldn't the thing be put off till the end of the season?"

Bernard smiled, and then shook his head, temper-

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ing the grieved expression on his face to the prejudices of the young man before him.

"The Briton from the Midlands would be ready to apply for a postponement of the millennium because he has an interest in a small-arms factory," said Mott.

"Oh, no; I'm not so bad as that," said Barry. "But, you see, I have a pony to ride at Ranelagh on Saturday next, and that is the kind of thing a chap can't throw over."

Bernard Mott knew so little of the feelings and prejudices of his countrymen as to be unable to perceive the infrangible nature of such a contract.

"A horse-race—nay, only a pony-race, and yet you regard it as of greater importance than the rescue of a hundred thousand men from the bonds which—"

"Good heavens, Mott, man, what are you talking about? A horse-race—only a pony-race. Lord, man, can't you see that this is one of the few things that there's no escape from in honour if you've promised to—oh, you must be able to see that! Why, man, think of the chaps that have put their money on me."

"You would forsake the cause in which you professed a sincere attachment in order that blacklegs and welshers may have an opportunity of swindling their victims."

Barry stared at him.

"My dear Mott," he said at last, "will you tell me where the blacklegs and swindlers come in, for, upon my soul, I don't know? How the mischief did you come upon the notion that Ranelagh was open to blacklegs and swindlers?"

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"A race-course is a race-course," said Mott; "and where there is a race-course there is the immorality of betting. You admit that money has been laid on you."

"Not on me, but on the pony—'Sam Slick.' And then it's only between one chap and another—across the table in a billiard-room or a pavilion at polo—just something to give an interest in the event. You haven't been at Ranelagh. Oh, come on Saturday, and you'll see that there's nothing in it. I'll send you a ticket."

"I'm not sure that I would be justified in accepting it. Still, I'll—no, I think I had better not go. Wouldn't it be compounding—"

"Compounding a felony? Well, not exactly. Come to Ranelagh for the same reason that the Scotch parson went to the 'Empire'—in order to be in a position to give evidence against it."

"If I allow myself to be persuaded to go, remember that I do not bind myself to refrain from denouncing it."

"You bind yourself to nothing. I daresay that I shall give up Ranelagh before long. Meantime, however, there's nothing about a Gymkhana that should frighten any one, and as for betting—well, I've backed myself for as much as thirty shillings, and I don't believe there's a bigger bet on the event. I must be trotting now. Good-night."

CHAPTER XIV

The neophyte socialist hurried off to his next house of call. He smiled as he thought of the stern, unbending aspect of his master. Stern and unbending were the words which were in his mind. 'Had not some historian applied them to a once-promising statesman? or was it a political party?

But before he reached the square for which he was bound, he had ceased to smile, for his thoughts passed from the austerity of the master to the austerity of the order that had come from the master's lips—the order to throw over the season and its attractiveness to carry the fastnesses of Northumberland.

It seemed to him that the discipline of modern socialism was founded upon that of ancient Jesuitry: when one of the order thought that he was getting on quite comfortably, a command came for him to go into a new field of labour, and that without the delay of a moment. He felt that socialism was a little too exacting in its demands made upon its votaries. He thought that a neophyte such as he was should be encouraged. But, of course, discipline was discipline; and no faith could flourish unless its votaries were willing to make sacrifices for its advancement. That was the principle upon which the Order of the Jesuits had been founded, and it was because its adherents had recognised the importance of its discipline, and

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had bowed cheerfully to the duties imposed upon them by the wisdoms of the heads of the order, that it had become a great power in the world.

Still, he thought that Bernard Mott and the other leaders of the movement with which he had associated himself might have found another emissary to send to the northern branch on special service.

But then, neither Bernard Mott nor the other leaders could know all that he was sacrificing in going—he had by this time made up his mind to go. He wondered if any one else could guess the extent of his sacrifice. No; he did not think that any one could fancy that, in estimating his sacrifice, his first thought—nay, his sole thought, had been of Coralie Randal. At any rate, he was certain—so blind may a young man of great natural ingenuousness become through constant association with persons whose straightforwardness is never open to question—he was certain that Bernard Mott could not possibly think for a moment that in asking him to undertake the mission to Northumberland he was separating him from—from what? from what?

But here there came before his eyes so varied a series of splendid possibilities—of golden opportunities—that his stern resolve to submit to the discipline of the faith was almost shaken.

Then the hansom pulled up at the great house in the great square, the windows of which were lighted up, and the hall of which was crowded with fair women in lace and feathery fabrics delicately diaphanous, and men with shirt-studs—one shirt-stud each—and footmen more glorious than the poppies of the field. He ran along the red drugget and up the fine

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staircase, and immediately after discovering his hostess he found Coralie by the side of his mother.

He saw at once that she was constrained in her bearing towards him. She did not greet him with her usual bright smile, with a sweet gravity about its edges. So that he thought that she felt hurt at his leaving her alone with Bernard Mott at Lady Glastonbury's, and hastened to apologise to her.

"I'm so sorry that I allowed Tommy Traffles to take me away," he said. "But it was about a pony," he added, as if he took it for granted that he had only to mention this fact to be excused for any rudeness, real or imagined.

"What else should it be about?" she asked; and now she smiled, but only for an instant. It seemed to him that she regretted having so far forgotten herself as to smile. She became grave and constrained as before, and spoke to Lady Glasnamara, almost turning her back upon him. He felt hurt. He felt himself to have been a fool in fancying that she liked to be listening to Bernard Mott; for it was plain from her attitude that she resented being left alone with him.

But because Coralie was almost rude to him, that was no reason why Lady Glasnamara should be almost rude to him. She turned to him, saying:

"Only think, Barry, Coralie is not in the least impressed by our idol, General Firebrace; she is not even impressed by Mr. Holt." Mr. Holt was the African exploiter. "She was not even impressed by the meeting of General Firebrace and Mr. Holt. She does not believe me when I assure her that that incident is the most important that has taken place since the meeting of Wellington and Blücher."

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"It was after the event that Wellington and Blücher met; but Firebrace and Holt met to-night to make things happen," said Barry.

"Bloodshed," said Coralie.

"Plenty of it," said Lady Glasnamara. "It is an inscrutable decree of heaven that nothing can be accomplished on earth without bloodshed. My father died fighting. Two of my brothers died fighting. One of my sons is a soldier and the other a sailor, and so may be called on any day to die for their queen and country; and yet I am content, knowing, as I do, that perpetual peace would mean perpetual prose—a growth of all that is least good in a nation, and a decrease of all the best qualities that go to build up a great nation. England is great among nations because she has always gone on that principle of self-sacrifice to-day for the benefit of to-morrow."

"That was not the principle that England adopted in regard to America," said Coralie, gently.

"But that was the principle which England in America adopted in regard to England at St. James's," said Lady Glasnamara. "That was how England in America became great. But good heavens! here we are talking imperialism, when all the people about us are taking snap-shots. I don't believe that you have spoken to three people since we left home. This is not in accordance with the best traditions of England on the other side of the Atlantic."

"I would much rather continue our conversation than be presented to all the people in the room," said Coralie.

"I was hoping that I might induce you to dance," said Barry. "That is why I came on here. I knew

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that there would be no dancing at Lady Glastonbury's, and a night out without a dance is like—now what is it like?"

"A salad without vinegar," suggested his mother. Coralie did not think that his questions concerned her.

"Vinegar was not in my mind, in that connection," said he. "No, I should rather say a cake without the icing. Come, Miss Randal, will you supply the icing to my evening's cake?"

There was some aptness in the simile, Lady Glasnamara thought, for Coralie was certainly frigid—more so than usual—as she said:

"I don't care about dancing to-night."

"You won't even let me supply the cake to your icing?" said Barry.

She shook her head.

"I could hardly dance with you, when I have been declining all the evening," she said.

"Why not?" he cried, cheerfully. "I promise you that I won't let the fact of your having refused all comers interfere with my pleasure."

"I don't want to dance; but I do not want to keep you from dancing," said she.

"There is only one way in which you can refrain from keeping me from dancing, and that is by dancing with me," said he. "Come; think of the splendid principle underlying—according to my mother—our imperialism; sacrifice yourself to-night, that you may think to-morrow how—how—well, I'm afraid I've got a bit bogged. But you know what I mean."

She was more frigid than ever in her manner of turning away from him.

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"I think I will sit down," she said. "But pray do not let me keep you from your dance."

"I won't," said he, with some measure of brusqueness.

And he didn't.

He walked quickly to the head of the stairs, and was fortunate enough to be able to intercept two sisters, who, with their mother, had just arrived. They were both pretty—more than pretty enough to serve his purpose, which, very properly, was to administer a snub to the pretty American girl who had turned so nasty all of a sudden, and about nothing, too; for was he to blame for leaving her alone with Bernard Mott? Why, he actually fancied, up to the moment of his entrance to this house, that she liked hearing Bernard Mott talk.

He danced with both the girls, and then with another girl, and after that with her chaperon, who was only a year or two younger than the girl herself. And all the time that he was dancing he saw that Coralie was receiving a great deal of attention from all sorts and conditions of men—as much as every pretty American girl whose father is in the canning business, or more profitable still, a municipal "boss," expects to receive. The men at this house were all nice nobodies—only polo-playing peers and sons of peers, soldiers who had done some fighting without becoming notabilities, spendthrifts who had come to see the error of their ways and were gratifying their parents by the meritorious attempts they were making to marry girls with fortunes. It was Barry's personal opinion that the nobodies were a good deal more interesting than the notabilities at Lady Glaston-

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bury's, though he doubted if this was the opinion of Coralie Randal.

At any rate, he hoped that she saw how actively he was dancing. He was rather vain of his dancing; but, after all, a little vanity only means a little humanity, and Barry Joyce's vanity was the means of giving three bright girls and a still brighter guardian of girls half an hour of unqualified pleasure, and he hoped that Coralie saw their glowing faces. He might be a nobody, but he could dance, and nobody who can make young women talk with drawn-in breath of his dancing need despair of his future.

CHAPTER XV

Coralie had gone away with Lady Glasnamara and Rosamund before Barry had finished his last dance. He strolled homeward smoking a cigar, and in due course went upstairs to his bedroom.

Before he reached that apartment, however, a voice called to him out of his sister's dressing-room.

"Hallo," he said, putting in his head. Rosamund had evidently just parted company with her maid. She was still sitting in front of the long mirror with her freshly brushed hair falling over her shoulders. Her bare feet were crossed in front of her, for the lace of the dressing-robe which she had put on when she had taken off her ball dress only reached to her ankles.

"I left the door open so that I might hear you passing," said she. "Come hither, and kiss me, dear."

"What?" he cried, jumping from the little sofa whereon he was accustomed to throw himself when exchanging confidences with his sister, as he frequently did for a minute or two at night. "What, you mean to tell me that—"

"I mean to tell you all that," she replied.

He gave an Irish cry of "Hurroo!" that startled Coralie in the midst of her prayers in the room opposite. Then he kissed Rosamund on the forehead, then on each cheek, and finally—the trick was one

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that he had preserved since his boyhood—on the tip of her nose.

"I'm so glad that it's all right at last," said he, when he had straightened himself, causing her to give a subdued shriek—a kind of shriek done up in cotton wool—as the stud in his shirt front tore a hair out by the root. Of course he calmly ignored her agony, merely disentangling the single hair that remained round the stud and blowing it into space. "Yes, I am glad that it has all come right at last."

"Ah, my dear gossoon," said she, nervously, "who can say for certain that anything is all right?"

"Who? Who? Look here, Rosamund, you don't mean to say that you still have a doubt or two lingering in some corner of your mind?"

He was standing with his hands in his pockets, looking down at her.

She made a motion as if sweeping something from before her face.

"No, no," she cried, with decision. "I have no more doubt of him than I had a year ago. Still—men—and we grow old—what a horrid law of nature it is that we cease to attract after a time."

He looked at her gravely for a few moments, and then burst into a laugh—one of those loud, derisive laughs which a man reserves specially for a sister.

"Great Lord Harry! who could have imagined that you were a girl to have notions like that—laws of nature! What have you or I got to say to the laws of nature? We must just take them as we find them, and make the best of them. My good woman, you have got the best rights of any one alive to complain. Laws of nature! Algy Grafton is the best fellow in

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the world; but you kept him without his answer for a year, because, like one of the educated girls of the age, you had made out a schedule of questions to be answered—for all the world like the series of questions put by a judge to a jury to help them to come to a right verdict on all the points in the issue."

"Barry, Barry, just think how little a girl can possibly know of any man before she marries him. Shouldn't the thought of that be enough to keep her from saying 'yes' to the first man who asks her if she will marry him?"

"It should indeed; and sometimes it does, too—not often, however. Which seems to me rather lucky on the whole. But how often have you and I come across cases of girls knowing a good deal that was awful about men, and yet marrying them without a moment's hesitation."

"I never knew a girl who refrained from marrying a bad man. You see she hopes to make a good man of him—yes, and very often she does."

"Yes, she does; especially when she has the valuable coöperation of a bad attack of gout or an accident with the hounds or a series of bad years with his farms, all of which are helps. Never mind, my dear woman. You know as well as I do that you would have agreed to marry Algy Grafton at the end of his year of probation, even if you had in the meantime found out a lot to his discredit."

She flushed, and then sighed and then laughed.

He only laughed.

She became solemn.

"No; I wouldn't have promised to marry him if he had run away at Omdurman," she said.

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He laughed again.

"What about that foot of his?" said he. "Did he explain to you with any degree of detail how he got that wound? No one seems to know anything of the details."

"Why should he tell me anything of the details?" she said, looking up with some surprise.

"Ah, that wound of his is a mystery," said Barry. "Firebrace laid his hand on his shoulder to-night, and said, 'Have you found out yet how you got it?'—he was asking after his wound. Algy turned red and became confused—both very plain signs of guilt."

"And the chief—what did General Firebrace say then?" she inquired, and there was actually some anxiety in her voice.

"He said nothing; but he shook his head. Now, supposing there's something discreditable about that wound of his? Would you marry him still?"

"Of course I would marry him. What do you take me for?"

There was a very strong note of indignation in her voice, and a flash came from her eyes.

"A woman—a very woman—that's what I take you for. My dear, good sister, a girl's heart is like an Irish jury in a land case; however the questions put by the judge may be answered, the verdict is still 'not guilty' when the lover is put on his trial. Never mind, Algy's trial is over at last, and the verdict is what I predicted it would be a year ago."

"What made you introduce that wound of his, gossoon?" During his childhood in Ireland Barry had been alluded to as "the gossoon" in the family circle,

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but only his sister kept up the practice, and then only to emphasise a confidence.

"It was a sudden inspiration I had," said he. "A hint was dropped on the subject by one of the Omdurman gang when I was talking with him at the Glastonburys'. Did he never tell you anything about it?"

"Is Algy the sort of man that brags about his wound?" she asked. "Besides, everybody knows that it was a wounded dervish who ran a spear through his ankle after the fight. Ever so many men were wounded in the same way."

"That's all right, then," said Barry. "But all the same, it's not what the Omdurman gang say about it."

"What do they say about it?"

"They say a good deal that is to the credit of Algy."

"Then you may depend on it, we'll never hear anything about it from Algy. And now, Barry, I want to talk to you about Coralie."

"About—"

"Coralie."

"Good-night."

He walked to the door, and though she called to him twice, he paid no attention, but walked along the corridor and upstairs to his room.

She remained seated in front of her glass for quite another ten minutes, though the hour was nearer three than two, and already the silver feathers of the dawn were glancing through the sides of the blinds. She was an unselfish girl, but after her brother's door was heard to shut overhead, no single thought of all her thoughts was given to him.

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All her thoughts were of the man who had kissed her, with her permission, behind a great palm in the greenhouse of Mrs. Severn's mansion that same night. She had met him at Mrs. Severn's dinner party before going on to the Glastonburys', and being a strategist by profession he had managed to lure her into the conservatory. It was in the shadow of the palm that he had asked her if she didn't think it was about time she made up her mind on the matter, which he had laid before her the previous year.

"Yes, I do believe it is about time," she had said in reply.

"You are sure that your mind is made up?" he had inquired, with great solicitude.

"Ah, it was made up from the first," she had whispered, going very close to him.

She would have been greatly disappointed if he had not kissed her at this point.

And now she was left to reflect upon that kiss.

But it was when she had got into bed that she began to think how she could ever have doubted that she loved Algy Grafton. Had she been, as Barry had suggested she was, so impregnated with that modern spirit of self-examination—of introspection—that she could not bring herself to yield at once to the impulses of her heart and to tell the man that she loved him?

Her attitude of a year ago was scarcely intelligible to her now, so quickly do phases and fancies of modern thought follow one another. And yet it had seemed to her a year ago that it would be a fearful thing if she were to promise to marry Algy Grafton and to find shortly afterwards—perhaps even before

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she had married him—that her love for him had been a delusion, had been no more enduring than the feeling she had entertained with lavish hospitality for certain youths who had shown a disposition to linger near her when riding in the park, and to take her hand in dim places in conservatories, not solely because they dreaded that she might not be able to find her way about lacking their assistance.

She had once or twice felt a certain *tendresse* for certain well-favoured and well-formed men who could ride horses—or, if necessary, elephants and even camels—which were never meant to be ridden, whose formation was, in fact, such as tended to frustrate the designs of a would-be rider; and she had felt, when Captain Algy Grafton came before her with the reputation of having once ridden a zebra, that it might be possible that the emotions of which she was conscious when she thought about him would eventually become as completely under her control as her emotions now were when she thought of the pony riders and elephant riders and camel riders who had wooed her in the past.

That was why—aided by a curious fashion of introspection which was *à la mode* that year—she had told Captain Grafton when he approached her on the subject, that she was afraid of the deception of her own heart, and wondered if he would think it worth his while waiting for a year—perhaps longer—until she should be quite certain that the feeling which she thought she had for him was a permanent one.

Being a man, he was honourable enough to tell a lie to reassure her, and being a woman, she easily allowed herself to be reassured, although she knew

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that it was a lie he told her when he said he would not mind waiting for ten years if it should take her that time making up her mind.

Of course, her father, who liked to have her about him, told her frankly that he believed that she was acting with admirable discretion in deferring her decision; and, equally as a matter of course, her mother, being a mother, and knowing that Algy Grafton had at his command £10,000 a year, in addition to his pay, which amounted to close upon £200 a year (to be qualified for drawing it he annually expended over £2,000), and was, besides, an extremely nice man, shook her head and expressed (in private to her husband) the wish to see all the pseudo-psychological novelists of the year who had advocated introspection at the bottom of the Irish Channel. Her husband felt that she had been merciful; she might have said the Atlantic Ocean.

But, equally as a matter of course, because a mother, she had still some wisdom left, and Lady Glasnamara had told Rosamund that a period of probation had undoubtedly a consolidating effect upon the affections of a young man of fortune in respect of a young woman of good looks. She added that she would not go so far as to suggest an entire year as the term of such a probation—no, the term that she had in her mind as suitable was one of six months, still—

But here Rosamund had laughed, and asserted that a term of probation, to be fully recognised as such, should be complete and not in part. It was like the blockade of a coast, she remarked; it would be recognised by a friendly power only if it were thoroughly effective. She had heard her father make some

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remarks on this particular point in the House of Lords a few days before.

She remembered all that had happened from the moment she had come to terms with Algy a year ago. She could not forget how, when he had got his orders to go out to the Sudan, and had said good-bye to her, not in the formal way of the stage lover or the Black Brunswicker—not in full uniform and with the stage orchestra playing "The Girl I Left Behind Me" behind the scenes—no, but in his usual light-hearted way, with a jest on his lips as he lit a fresh cigar, she had flung herself on her bed—the very bed on which she was lying when recalling the events of the year—with her face down upon the pillow, and had wept wilder tears than were ever shed by a stage heroine while the orchestra played "The Anchor's Weighed."

She remembered how she had accused herself, with her fingers clutching the lace that bordered the pillow, of sending him forth to his death. If she had not been a fool she would have agreed to marry him, and he would have left the army and settled down to the business of hunting in the winter and polo in the summer. But she had sent him forth to his death, all because of a foolish fancy of hers that there was some depth of thought in the book written some months before by a very foolish woman on the subject of the deceitfulness of a woman's heart and a man's love.

She had passed a very bad night, but in the morning she was all right, through fancying that she felt happy because her lover was going to the war, and when some months later the newspapers were filled with the accounts of the fighting in the Sudan, she

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felt that she had done well in sending her lover out to gain the indelible honour of a game leg.

Wounded, (severely) Lieut.-Colonel (it did not matter about a colonel) 3rd Bayonettiers.

Captain Algernon Rose-Grafton, R. H. A. (in the ankle).

That was where Algy's name limped into the papers; and then she felt that she had done it, and she was glad.

And now she was lying awake in the summer dawn, feeling that, after all, introspection is only another name for self-deception. She did not go asleep for another hour after she had come to this conclusion.

CHAPTER XVI

Rosamund told Coralie all about it the next day. This was how it came about.

There had been a long spell of fine weather for the month of June. It had lasted for three days, but at last the long-looked-for rain came. The two girls were giving themselves the luxury of an afternoon at home: they had been out for luncheon. Rosamund was answering invitation cards for July festivities. She came upon one from Mrs. Everleigh, wife of the brigadier-general.

"We must accept that whatever others we have to throw over," she said. "Yes, all the fighting men are sure to be there."

"Fighting men again?" said Coralie. "The Omdurman gang again? Do you know that I am getting quite tired of hearing of the Omdurman gang?"

Rosamund looked up.

"Good heavens!" she cried. "And I am going to marry one of them."

Coralie stared at her in silence for some moments—in fact, until Rosamund's flush had died away, and that took some little time.

"Are you so greatly surprised?" asked Rosamund. "It seems to be taken for granted that a girl must get married sometime. When I was made aware that it

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was expected of me to follow the example of my sisters in this matter, I made up my mind that I would marry a man. Thank God, I am marrying a man! I hold that that's the most satisfactory union."

"Yes," said Coralie, thoughtfully. "But you did not tell me before that you were to be married to any one in particular."

"I could scarcely tell you what I didn't know myself, my Coralie," laughed Rosamund. "The fact is that I only became aware of it last night."

"You have made up your mind to marry Captain Grafton?"

"Now, how on earth did you manage to hit upon him, of all people in the world? Well, I need not make a pretence of denying it to so astute a young woman. Yes, I frankly admit that I made up my mind to marry Algy Grafton the first time I saw him. I led him on, you see, until it was too late for him to draw back. That is what a girl should always do if she can manage it. In fact, that's what most of us are supposed to do. So we are slandered. Now congratulate me on my success. I'm going to marry a man. I'm going to marry a man! That's the refrain that my heart has been singing ever since—since—well, I do believe that that triumphal march began the day I first saw Algy. But then it only seemed to be picking out the tune in the treble with one finger; it only gave the faintest suggestion of the full orchestra that is now playing that magnificent concerto, 'I'm going to marry a man,' while my heart beats time."

Rosamund had jumped up from the little French escritoire at which she was sitting, and had thrown

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herself back on one end of the sofa, with her hands clasped at the back of her shapely head. Rapture was in her attitude and in her voice.

Coralie laughed, and then threw herself upon her, kissing her cheeks.

"You deserve everything good—everything—and more," she cried. "We have no girl like you on our side, I think—at least I never met her. The worst of you is that you say what we all think. But you deserve the best of mankind—you deserve even a man with brains."

"Psha!" cried Rosamund. "Who cares anything about brains in a man? Not I for one—not you for another, I would hope."

"Oh, you speak too fast," said Coralie, gravely protesting.

"I don't speak too fast. Do you fancy you know yourself? You don't. I know you far better than you know yourself. You fancy that you could only love a man who has brains. If I wasn't sure that you will one day change your views in this matter, I should think of your future with dismay. Oh, yes; I think far better of you than to fancy for a moment that you'll ever marry a man because he happens to have brains."

Coralie assumed the pained expression of the young woman whose dignity has been wounded. She had resumed her seat at the other end of the sofa, and had picked up the book which she had laid down when Rosamund began to speak—it had been recommended to her the previous day by Bernard Mott. She had been feeling all the afternoon that it was a book with a great depth in it. She felt quite miserable because she found it deadly dull. The author was a Socialist

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leader—"All Socialists are leaders; Socialism has no followers," Rosamund had said one day, and it was well worth earnest study. She had given the first chapter her most earnest attention; and she felt humiliated at being unable to understand anything of its meaning. Whatever the author's aims had been, he had certainly never succeeded in being lucid.

Coralie had felt the book to be dull as a ventriloquist: the author seemed to her to speak in a voice that was not his own; that voice seemed to come not from the brain, but from that anatomical region which the ventriloquist makes vocal.

She had felt annoyed, not because the book was dull, but because she had found it dull. That was why she shook her head sadly in reply to Rosamund's last taunt.

"You needn't do that," cried Rosamund. "It's only the girls who have no choice in the matter who marry men because they happen to have brains; and you are not one of those girls. You have, I suppose, far more money than you can ever spend; you have charm, you come from the States, and, best of all, you know how to dress—if you did not know how to dress, all the other qualities would be useless. Yes, you are in a position to choose, and most certainly you'll choose a man, not a student, which is just the opposite."

"I say, only brains—"

"You may say anything you please, my dear; but when it comes to acting you'll act precisely as I predict, and you'll live happy ever after."

"I could not be happy married to a man I knew to be inferior to me."

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"I knew you would come to agree with me. I knew that you would honestly confess that you could not marry a student, but a man who can swing forty-pound dumb-bells about him—that's the man who is superior to all of us, and to whose superiority we all bow down."

"You mistake me, Rosamund. That is mere physical superiority. I was thinking of the superiority of brains."

"Nonsense. There's no superiority worth talking about except physical superiority. Brains do not enter into the question of loving and being loved. Heavens! if it were otherwise, the English people would become as the pigmies of the forest, and they'd be eaten up by such inferior races as the Germans or the Frenchmen, or even the Spaniards. Your students will tell you that that is the truth. Of course I allow that we poor women should have brains—we must have brains, we are such poor things otherwise; but one set of brains is enough for a household, and the woman should possess that set. She nearly always does. That's why most marriages are a success. Those that are the most notorious failures are the ones where the brains are on the side of the man. Look at your poets. The Milton *ménage* was a trifle *triste*, the Shelley was shady, the Byron brutal, the Dryden dreary. These are our English poets, and it is in England, we know, that the 'Home' as a sentiment is thought most of. If we go abroad—oh, I'll preach no more. I've preached too long already. I've brains enough to know that a preacher with a long sermon has no chance of convincing any one—

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most preachers find it hard enough to convince any one with a short."

"I don't mean to be convinced," said Coralie, after a thoughtful pause.

"No one was ever yet convinced by argument who was not on the side of the arguer to start," said Rosamund.

Coralie gave a laugh, and put herself into a comfortable position for resuming her book. An anatomical outline of the disposing of her limbs in this pose of great comfort would have been an astonishment to any one except an artist in black and white, who is prepared for anything and shrinks at nothing so far as the human frame at ease is concerned.

But that was just where Coralie made a mistake; for when Rosamund looked up from her fourteenth reply card she perceived that her friend was picturesquely but profoundly asleep.

It is only the most interesting of books that can survive the assumption of an attitude of extreme ease by the reader, and Coralie's volume on "Bread and Brotherhood" was not that book.

But perhaps she had not made so great a mistake, after all.

Barry, coming into the room in expectation of cream cakes and tea, was only fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of her attitude on the sofa, but it was quite enough to enrapture him. At the sound of the door's opening she had whisked herself into commonplaceness. Her feet were on the floor once more, and so, alas! was her book.

He picked it up, and laid it on the sofa.

It seemed to her that there was something of

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reproach in the act—he had brought her the book in the morning—and she hastened to explain that she had not yet become accustomed to the changes of the English climate.

He said, "What about those hot cakes?"

"It is not yet five o'clock," said his sister. "Hot cakes are not hot at five minutes to five or five minutes past five."

"Have you duly congratulated Rosamund?" he asked of Coralie.

"I've told her that she deserved to marry a man with brains," said Coralie.

"And I forgot to ask her what I had ever done to deserve such a fate," said Rosamund. "But, after all, she meant well, only she has her own notions about congratulations."

Then Rosamund picked up a paper or two and an envelope or two, as if in search of something. She tried one of the drawers of the escritoire, murmured "How tiresome!" and left the room.

Coralie picked up the book.

"I did not thank you for getting this for me, Mr. Joyce; I had no chance before now," she said.

"Don't let the chance occur until you have finished it," he said. "I'm sorry that I can't bring myself to think so highly of it as some other people do. I've heard people speak so highly of it that I've been convinced they didn't understand it. Have you mastered the preface?"

"I read it—yes, I think I read it. Of course I did; I remember that passage about the abolition of slavery, and then the shooting down of the Carnegie workmen," said Coralie. "He's right there, isn't

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he? It is sheer hypocrisy for people to declaim against the enslavement of the black while they decline to allow freedom of combination to the white."

"There's force in that contention," acquiesced Barry. "And then you'll come to what he says about Chicago. And when those things are done in the name of a republic founded upon the broadest principles of justice and brotherhood, can we wonder that Russia is what it is to-day, that Turkey should be the tyrant it is to-day, that England should be apathetic as it is to-day?"

"Apathetic—that's the national fault. I've been able to see so much already," cried the girl. "If there were half a dozen men like Bernard Mott, England would soon be roused. He would show people that he was in earnest—that he meant to make things happier."

"Bernard Mott is a born orator," said Barry. "He can make people do anything, if they only go to listen to him. I wish we could induce people to come to our meetings."

"He will have all England at his feet in a year or two," said Coralie. "Yes, he told me so. He knows. But England is so apathetic. He complains bitterly of England's apathy. And Parliament—well, I got a glimpse of Parliament. There was no note of sincerity in it. Even you, Mr. Joyce; you call yourself a Socialist—people are looking to you for help, and yet—you—you—dance—you actually dance—dance—and ride polo ponies! And you know that the music to which you are dancing is made up of the groans of the poor wretches who are trodden into the earth by the iron heels of tyranny and taxation."

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She had sprung from her place on the sofa, and was standing with clenched hands in front of him. Her words sounded like a faint musical echo of the impassioned phrases of Bernard Mott. Greatly though he admired Bernard Mott and his phrases, yet somehow his soul revolted at the sound of this echo of the master. •

Still, he felt glad to notice that she had been vexed at his dancing the previous night. He loved her, and he meant that she should be vexed.

"I'm afraid that I have, as you say, been lukewarm," he said. "But I mean to make up for all that. I have engaged myself to go northward on Monday to lead a crusade against the tyranny of the taskmasters. I shall be there for perhaps two months.

CHAPTER XVII

He thought to see her face lighten with pleasure. He thought that she would fling out a hand to him—a hand of approval and encouragement, but she did nothing of the sort. On the contrary, the news seemed to annoy her, when she had recovered from her surprise. Yes, he felt sure that the expression which followed her look of surprise was one of annoyance.

She did not speak for some time. She stepped back to the sofa and seated herself once more where she had been. He watched her. He was nearly sure that she was feeling vexed again; this time at his announcement that for two months, at any rate, he would refrain from dancing.

He was determined that she should speak first, and she did.

She had picked up the book, and was turning over its leaves rather listlessly, when she said:

"Of course you are quite right to go—to the North. Is it far away?"

"Oh, not what you would call far in the States—only three or four hundred miles," he replied.

"No, that's not so far," she said. "But you will not be able to return every night."

"No, I certainly shall not return every night; in fact, if I can contrive to pay a flying visit home once

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a month, I shall feel that I have done very well indeed. So you see that I am not quite so apathetic as you fancied, Miss Randal." •

"I hope you will forgive me," she said. "I thought that you were—well, you never gave me to understand that your devotion to—to—the cause was very deep." •

"I often wondered myself if it was," said he. "It was not until Mott asked me to go to this place—Barkstone, in Northumberland—and I agreed, I knew how devoted I was to the cause."

"I am glad—so glad—that the test has come, and that you have shown yourself to be worthy of—of—Mr. Bernard Mott did not tell me that you were going when I talked to him last night. Perhaps he didn't know that you would go."

"I daresay he wasn't quite sure of me. I don't blame him. As a matter of fact, I wasn't quite sure of myself. I don't know at this moment if he doesn't think me something less than lukewarm because I wouldn't agree to leave before riding at Ranelagh on Saturday."

"You could hardly be expected to go away when you had to ride in the pony-race."

"That is what I thought yesterday when I gave him my answer; but now that I have come to think over the matter, I think that perhaps—"

"Oh, no; you could not have gone when you had promised to ride the pony—isn't it 'Sam Slick'?"

"Yes; I'm to ride Sam Slick. But Bernard Mott's attitude is quite intelligible to me. He naturally looks upon pony-racing as something that should not be seriously considered for a moment in comparison

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with a Socialist mission. He actually thought that I was placing myself on a level with a common jockey, and that the green at Ranelagh would be swarming with bawling bookmakers—he said something about blacklegs and welshers; he had read an account of a race-meeting written from the standpoint of the anti-gamblers, and he naturally thought of Ranelagh as something in precisely the same line and with the same atmosphere."

"I don't see that he is so much to blame for that; he has been labouring all his life on behalf of the cause which we have at heart, and has had no time for trifling."

"That's quite true. When I think of the time that I have wasted—idling at Oxford—loafing about town. I actually learned to play the violin—Bernard Mott rescued me from all this."

It was at this point that Rosamund returned to the room.

"I hope that you will enjoy—that is, I hope that you will be able to do great things at—what's the name of the place?" said Coralie, at the moment of her entrance.

"Barkstone," replied Barry. "We have been discussing the condition of the operatives there; I think I understand the situation. If I find that I am wrong, I shall very likely have to stay an additional month."

"Who is Barkstone? Where is Barkstone? Why this talk about Barkstone?" asked Rosamund, locking up her escritoire.

"It is to Barkstone that he is going," said Coralie. "You told Rosamund, didn't you?"

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"I'm afraid that I neglected to do so," said Barry. "Our attention was absorbed by quite another subject."

"What is he going to Barkstone for?" asked Rosamund.

"In the Cause," cried Coralie, almost proudly. "He is going to—to—teach the people in what direction their salvation—their social salvation lies."

"How nice!" said Rosamund. "He's to be something like a Social Salvation Army General, I suppose. Thank goodness, here is tea at last. I hope you'll be able to find a shop at Barkstone where you can get cream cakes like these."

It was perfectly plain that there was no use trying to talk of the social situation at Barkstone in the presence of such a scoffer as Rosamund, and it became additionally hopeless when an ally arrived in the form of Captain Grafton.

"And you are just in time to congratulate Barry," cried Rosamund, when Coralie had offered the newcomer her congratulations. "Barry has just got his first commission."

"Is he starting in that line? Has Miss Randal told him to put ten thousand dollars on Sam Slick?"

"It's not a racing commission, but a roving one," said Rosamund. "His commission is in the Social Salvation Army, and he has got his marching orders for a place called Barkstone, in Northumberland; so that he's scratched for all engagements for the rest of the season."

"Oh, that's the man with the tousled hair again," said Alg. "He's the Head Centre or something, isn't he? He graced my lady's salon last night with

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a thing that's called a dickey pinned in front of his flannel shirt. I judge that that compromise for evening dress has been accepted by the sumptuary committee of the Brotherhood. What good cakes these are! I hear that Sam Slick is very fit. He'll take a great deal of beating. Were you on the course to-day, Barry?"

Coralie was very angry at this man's references to Bernard Mott. She felt that they were vulgar, and so they were. She was, curiously enough, equally angry—only she did not know it—at the easy way in which both he and Rosamund accepted the communication of Barry's intended departure for the remainder of the season. She had fully expected that they would endeavour to turn him from his purpose, and that, in consequence, she should have a difficult task to discharge in standing up for him. She wanted to have a chance of standing up for Barry, now that he was going away, and also because—but she did not know it—she had refused to dance with him the night before, and had sent him to dance with two young strange and very pretty girls, and the still younger chaperon of another.

It was not until she had gone to her room that night, after dining out and annoying half a row of earnest students of modern comedy—represented by the short skirts and the impertinent cigarette of the leading lady—by entering a theatre with her party in the middle of the second act, that Coralie found time to reflect upon the foolishness of the fear that had caused her to refuse to dance with Barry.

She tried to remember all that Bernard Mott had said to her at Lady Glastonbury's on the subject of

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the designs of an impecunious aristocracy in regard to American heiresses. He had been quite delicate in his allusions, she could not but acknowledge. How differently would Captain Grafton have worded his warning. He would certainly have been coarse and slangy; and yet Captain Grafton belonged to one of the greatest families in England—in the world; while Bernard Mott was only a son of the people. Yes, he had spoken with great delicacy, and with well-chosen words that had just been sufficient to warn her—just sufficient to suggest to her a possibility that she had never previously-entertained.

But he had been mistaken—Bernard Mott had been greatly mistaken in fancying, as he had suggested—that it was the hope of the Joyce family to see Barry married to her; for Barry was setting out on a mission that would occupy all his attention for some months.

“So I might as well have had my dance with him after all,” was the thought that came to her at once. She felt now that she would certainly have danced with him twice—three times—if she had known that he was going away and that the season of dances would be over before she should see him again.

And as a sort of background to this momentary tenderness she was conscious of a curious feeling of irritation that he was going away. It was not until she had wondered if it was possible that he had made up his mind to accept that mission by reason of the two things that she had said to him during the previous day or two—about the glory of working on behalf of his fellow-men, pointing out to them the way in which they should walk, and assuming generally the

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rôle of the reformer—that her feeling of irritation and of anger gave way to a feeling of pride.

She could not but feel proud at the thought that she had accomplished so much. She had awakened this well-meaning but somewhat apathetic young man to a sense of his duty, and whatever good might be achieved by his mission would be due to her influence.

She went off to sleep, laying this flattering unction to her soul; for vanity is in some natures an excellent soporific.

And it was just when the wounded vanity of this natural girl—she did not know that she felt irritated because her vanity was wounded by the announcement by Barry of his departure—was being healed by the reflection that she had become a power in the world, that Rosamund and her brother were engaged in one of their midnight chats, not in the dressing-room, but in the billiard-room.

"I should like to know why you are mixing yourself up with this nonsense," said the girl. "Is it because you are really a bit of a fool, or do you see further than we do?"

"If you mean to ask me why I am going to Barkstone, I can tell you," he replied. "I'm going because I believe that the men there have lost half of their manhood, and I fancy that I may be able to do something for them. That's all."

"You do not hesitate at throwing over Coralie?" she said.

He looked quickly up from the projected cannon off the cushion and replaced his cue in the rack. Then he went to where his tumbler stood—squeezed a



"I should like to know why you are mixing yourself up with this nonsense."

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little soda water into the whiskey which was there already, and walked toward the door.

"Good-night," he sang out, when his hand was on the handle.

"Don't be a goose. Come back at once," said she. "I insist on your coming back and answering me: Do you really intend throwing over Coralie—and me—for the rest of the season? And why do you run away when I ask you a simple question?"

He returned to one of the lounges.

"You put the question in a queer form the first time," said he.

"I did nothing of the sort. You are throwing us over. Can you deny it?"

"Well, when you put it that way—"

"You have disappointed me—yes, greatly. You begin to quibble when I ask you the simplest question imaginable. Coralie is a charming girl, and you know it, and she knows it, too. She is charming because she is so impressionable, and she is impressionable because she is so charming; instead of which, as the magistrate said, you are leaving her—her and me—to face the rest of the season alone."

"Your logic, my sister—"

"Oh, burn logic! Who minds logic, unless socialists and vegetarians and conscientious objectors and idiots of that sort? What I say is, that socialism, like charity, should begin at home. You should try to do something for your sister and the guests at your father's house. Everything was going on so well till you insisted on bringing that friend of yours on the scene—Bernard Mott, as he calls himself."

"He couldn't call himself anything except his

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name; that would be dishonest, wouldn't it?" suggested Barry. He thought that it was rather weak for her to attack his friend. And so it was. He felt that she should have known him better than to fancy she would prevail with him by abusing his friend. And so she should.

She looked at him for a while. There was a suggestion of pity in her look.

"I do believe that you are a bit of a fool after all, Barry," she said, after a considerable pause.

"I hope that I am generally looked on as a bit of a fool," said he. "It's only the chaps that have been looked on as bits of fools that do things."

"Idiotic things. Why did you bring Bernard Mott on the scene when we were all settling down into our proper places?"

"You are quite as lucid as you usually are when you speak enigmatically, my sister. That last question of yours—our proper places—settling down—"

"Tell me this: was it Bernard Mott who ordered you to leave us just now?"

"It was, of course, Bernard Mott who gave me this chance of showing what's in me—what I can do—perhaps, as it will turn out, what I cannot do."

"I thought so." Here she gave a derisive laugh. "Yes, I thought Mr. Mott had a voice in the matter. Well, whatever you may be, Mr. Mott is certainly not a bit of a fool. On the contrary, he's a very clever man. I can't say worse of him than that."

"It's going far, beyond doubt."

"I meant to go far. And you—oh, you had better go to bed, in order that you may have a good sleep before you say good-bye to Coralie."

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He sat still, looking earnestly at the tips of his fingers. She rose and went with a very pleasant swish towards the door. She gave a very effective stage yawn when about to turn the handle, and she took very good care that he saw the yawn. She had observed that when the young woman in the play gives such a yawn, the young man before whom she is thus simulating complete indifference knows that she is extremely interested, and says, "Stay; one moment!"

"Stay; one moment!" said Barry, as though he had been rehearsing the scene for weeks.

She stayed, turning round at the door with the glance of simulated surprise of the young woman on the stage who hears the man bidding her to stay.

"I wish you would speak a few straightforward words, and not be roundabout as a poet," said Barry. "I want you to tell me if you mean that—that—no, on second thoughts I find that I don't want you to explain anything. Good-night."

She still paused at the door. Not for some moments did she turn again with an impatiently expressed "good-night," and the next moment the door closed, with no special gentleness, behind a greatly disappointed young woman.

He felt that if he had been in her place he would at least have taken care to close the door gently.

He did not go to bed for another hour.

CHAPTER XVIII

Bernard Mott did not grudge the half-sovereign which he paid at the gate on that lovely Saturday afternoon when he arrived at the grounds of the Ranelagh Club. On the contrary, he felt that the coin was well spent. It is very difficult assuming the mode of life of people who are splendidly rich, or splendid paupers, without falling into the habit, which is automatic with them, of spending money.

Mr. Mott had some experience of this fact; but having set his hand to the plough—

Still, the half-sovereign, following on the hansom fare—Barnes Elms was outside the boundary, he found out when he got there, and the handsomeer was not dead to the typography of the district in its relation to Charing Cross—caused a wincing pang.

Why the mischief could not these people do the thing on a generous scale, and allow admission by ticket to be free? he thought. And he felt that he had done wisely in resisting the temptation to buy a silk hat for the occasion. He had only bought a pair of linen cuffs—the sort that are sold with the sleeve-links given into the bargain. He had nothing of the gambler's spirit about him. He was the sort of man who would select the smallest sprat in his bait if he had set out to catch a salmon.

Before he had been in the grounds for an hour he

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thoroughly grudged the half-sovereign as well as the three and sixpence hansom fare. He felt more miserable than he had done for years—since the days when he used to walk in the Strand feeling the profundity of his condition of nonentity, and at the same time feeling that he had it in him to be somebody who would be able to cause people, even in the Strand, to nudge one another, inquiring what his name was.

He felt miserable to find himself in the midst of the loneliness of this great crowd of men and women and girls, wearing hats with feathers of many tints, and boas—not the constrictor variety, but the more deadly, the fluffy, feathered species that make the face under which it floats quite irresistible. They were here by the thousand, having got out of their carriages, leaving them under the splendour of the foliage; he had never seen women so beautifully dressed as those who were seated on the chairs or strolling about the grounds.

And some of them were even beautiful of themselves.

And the men—well, the men were not spectacular as a rule. He thought that he had seen as good-looking and as well-dressed men behind counters in North London, and this thought helped to lighten his loneliness. Only for a time, however; he felt that if he had been able to recognise among the men who looked like shopkeepers a single North London shopkeeper whom he had known in his boyhood, he would have been cheered for the rest of the day. But it soon became apparent to him that the North London shop-keeping class was not represented here.

(It so happened that the man whose face was

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reminiscent to him of the ham and beef industry was ex-Lord High Solicitor of England. The first glimpse that Bernard Mott, old Mott's son of Burton Heath, had of this embodiment of legal smugness brought back to his ears the sound of the grating of the thin ham-knife upon the sharpening steel.)

He had never felt so lonely in all his life. He knew no one in all this well-dressed crowd, and no one knew him. Worse, he knew by instinct that if he had told any one what his name was, the person so informed would have been no wiser than before. He felt himself to be the only looker-on in the place. All the other people were chatting and laughing together, talking about the events (sporting) of the past and of the future, talking about the lady drivers and their respective chances, talking society jargon that had no meaning for him. They all somehow seemed to him to belong to one party. One man in one group would wave his hand and take off his hat to some one in another group, and then the other one would signal a greeting to a still more distant group. The friendly recognitions went on like a beacon-fire connection round the coast, until it seemed to Bernard Mott that he was the only solitary person present.

He was more solitary than the policeman.

The crowd was divided into two parts: himself and the other people.

The other people constituted the people; he was the sole looker-on.

He heard from one group that "Tommy 'all's all right: he has fallen on his feet again as usual"; from a second, that "Gertie's making up for lost

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time, but, for that matter, Reggie always was a cheeky boy"; from a third, that "if Toddy could give Jimmy eight pounds in the five furlongs, the race for the selling plate was a cert"; from a fourth, that "if Daddy only behaved like a Christian, for once, he would set us up in a little box somewhere, and we'd live happy ever after"; from a fifth, that "Chris has just written to say that he's had a stroke of luck at last. he's got a job on a wool station, under an overseer who's not an Irishman; so Chris may get on. The overseer was at Corpus with him, a chap called Stimson; a regular sitter, you know."

He didn't know. The snatches of casual chat meant nothing to him. Their unintelligibility to him only increased the burden of his loneliness, just as the loneliness of a man arriving in a strange land is increased when he hears on all sides a language not a word of which he understands.

And then the bell rang for an "event," and there was a general movement from all parts of the ground for the course. At the same instant the sun, which had been hidden in a white haze of slow-drifting cloud all the morning, sent a searchlight drifting over the ground, bringing out all the soft emerald of the turf and the myriad greens of foliage, as well as the kaleidoscopic confusion of tints in satin, in velvet, in feathers, in lace. The flutter of chiffons, the spreading of sunshades, the stately swing of the velvets, the swish of the silks, and the gentle bourgeoning of the muslins had all a charm of their own; and that was why the Lord Chancellor, more strongly suggesting in his hours of ease the North London tradesman in his hours of work, laid his hand on the

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arm of the other Chancellor—him of the Exchequer—saying:

"To begin it all over again—the struggle for briefs on week days, and for smiles—one smile—on Saturday! To be part of the colour—part of the life—part of the race. Eh! what's the winning? It's not the winning, but the working, that makes up life. What shall it profit a man—"

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had been doing his best not to look puzzled, brightened up at the sound of the word "profit." It represented solid ground of reflection to him—mental concrete.

"It's like that swing of colour to look back on, my friend," said he; "but, by the Lord Harry, it was a grind at the moment."

"I'd sell my Seal for a year of youth," said the Lord Chancellor.

"And I'd sell my soul for it," said he of the Exchequer. "Ay, and you'd do the same."

There was a thoughtful and very important pause before the legal man said:

"Yes; but if the soul is sold for the Seal, what then?"

"In that case—we'll go to the Pavilion together," said the tax-master.

They went toward the Pavilion.

Bernard Mott overheard one of the phrases. It was then that he became aware of the identity of the Lord Chancellor, for, as he turned his head, Bernard saw that he was extremely like his caricatures! But in the case of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was he who was caricaturing his caricatures.

And then there was a laugh that rippled all along

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the semi-circle of the course, with the sound of a wave's crescendo slipping along a long crescent of shallow sand. Some joke had happened in one of the conditional races. The live "dummy" had mounted the pony from which a competitor had, in compliance with the conditions of the contest, dismounted, and had galloped off. The good old trick never failed; and the laugh rippled along.

Bernard Mott, standing apart, felt very bitter against the youths whose jest had called for the applause of that laugh, and he felt more bitterly still against the well-dressed people for giving so hearty a welcome to such buffoonery. But it was always the way of the world—especially the fashionable world (so called). There were thousands of people assembled in their best clothes to witness the by-play of a couple of buffoons—men who could do nothing except ride, and even their riding was, he knew, inferior to that of a jockey, a common jockey—whereas he, Bernard Mott, the Socialist leader, could with difficulty induce a hundred people to come to the hall where he lectured with an eloquence and ability which not half a dozen men had at their command.

He had read Carlyle's "French Revolution," and now as he looked over the long lines of men and women in their best clothes, eager to applaud the riders who came trotting down the course, he recalled the dyspeptic diatribes against the witless aristocrats who had sat down to eat and to drink and risen up to play, regardless of the flood which was gathering force to overwhelm them.

He gave the laugh of a Danton—of a Marat. Perhaps that crowd of unconscious aristocrats might be

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nearer the end than they fancied. Perhaps when his day came they would regret that they had spent their time applauding buffoonery when they might have been listening to him—learning from him.

And then the bell rang again for another event.

Bernard Mott was not a fool, by any means. He was only a man with a very limited experience of men. He had always lived within a very small circle, and had always regarded himself as the centre of that circle. Kepler might have added another law to those which he formulated. He might have written: "Every man is the centre of his own horizon circle."

That is the very handsome concession which nature makes to a man, and if all men remained with their eyes on the level of the sea, they would all see the same distance out from the centre of their circle.

But some men climb mountains, and when no mountains are handy they climb ladders.

Bernard Mott had never climbed a mountain, and if he had got to the top of the ladder, it was too short a flight to give him any of that exhilaration which comes from a long climb and a sense of an expanded horizon circle.

Some time before he had received that invitation from Lady Glastonbury he believed that there was no possibility of any circle existing of which he was not the centre. He met with a great disappointment during his first hour in Lady Glastonbury's drawing-room; for he found that he was regarded as a nonentity—so far as any one who attended a reception at Lady Glastonbury's could be a nonentity. Some people—they had never been to Lady Glastonbury's—were of the opinion that to be invited to that particu-

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lar house made one a distinct entity; but Bernard Mott knew better.

His vanity had a tough job keeping his head up in the face of the inattention which was lavished on him by his fellow-guests; but then Barry Joyce had asked to be introduced to him, and Lady Glastonbury had mentioned that he was the son of a peer; and this incident put new life into his vanity.

Not for a moment did its renewed vitality fail him after that night. But even if it had done so, it would certainly have been revived by his meeting with that beautiful and presumably rich girl from the States, who had paid him so much attention upon every occasion that they had been together.

That was how the accommodating little demon who sits on the shoulder of the egoist and whispers into his ear, as a pigeon used to sit on the shoulder of the greatest egoist the world has ever known, put it: the beautiful American girl was paying attention to him.

His egoism was appeased by the suggestion of that highly morphined phrase; for it was not in his nature to pause in order to analyse the composition of that phrase, and to find out if it was genuine or merely one of those quack nostrums which nursing mothers administer to their rebellious children—all of them tainted with original sin—to soothe their nerves, shattered by a six-months' experience of a world unlike any they had been in previously.

Yes, it was she who was paying attention to him.

The morphine dissolved in the soothing syrup was doing its work. His vanity felt soothed, though he knew perfectly well that at that moment she was paying attention to the "event" in motion on the course.

CHAPTER XIX

They came along nobly, the ladies who were taking part in the driving competition, working their teams of four between the posts, which were placed so close together as to leave only the smallest working margin. They conducted their negotiations with the skill which adroit diplomatists display (occasionally) in another direction.

Bernard Mott found himself, by no will of his own, breaking through the resolution of aloofness which he had formed; he automatically drew near to the outskirts—they were outskirts of embroidered cashmere and flowered muslin and lace upon satin—of the crowd. He had never seen such a thing as women driving coaches; he did not think that such a thing could be. He had never imagined such a thing, any more than women fencing with rapiers. He wondered how it was that he had never heard that ladies could manage teams of four as easily as men do—nay, much more easily than some men do. Why did the newspapers not make it known that this great wonder had come to pass? They chronicled stuff and nonsense enough about the rotation of the world of fashion—about women looking well in picture hats, whatever picture hats are; about girls looking “smart” (they had found it necessary to go to the scullery-maid for an expressive word, and she had

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given them this word "smart" for their descriptions: it applied only to her young man's Sunday tie); he had even read that a certain prince looked very nice in his mourning. All stuff and nonsense! But no word had they ever printed about that wonderful thing which was going on under his eyes. •

He felt once more as one might feel who is whirled from one world to another. The people in the crowd before his eyes were treating the whole thing as if it were an ordinary occurrence, criticising "Maudie's" coolness when the off-wheeler had become a bit "nappy," and passing remarks upon the fussiness of "Georgy" when she had to turn her team for the posts. He kept staring at this "event," not knowing when it had begun or the principle involved in the competition. But when he turned his head for a moment he saw a face which he recognised, though he had not seen it for years, the face of the junior partner in the brewery, where he had once served as an under clerk.

The man's face wore a smile—a curious smile that was half a sneer and within a line or two of being a snarl. He was surrounded with friends—women as well dressed as if they were milliners' models, and men as well dressed as if they were on the stock exchange. The partner in a brewery can, of course, surround himself with the very best of everything. The man showed that he felt quite at home in this place and in this society, and Bernard Mott felt that he was sneering at his (Bernard's) expression of loneliness. •

And so he was.

Mr. Mott stared once more at the driving ladies,

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and he had sufficient command over himself to refrain from giving any sign when he heard one of the well-dressed ladies in the neighbourhood of the brewer remark in a whisper, that was made a whisper only that it might be the more clearly audible:

"Nonsense! Ham and beef shop? Are there shops where those things are sold cooked? Good heavens! What are we coming to at Ranelagh? Hurlingham will really be the only *élégant* place left to us. Ham and beef! How funny! But any one could see that the poor devil felt dreadfully out of it. Who has won—not Maudie Harcourt? Then you owe me a fiver."

He had been recognised at last. He had at last seen a face that he recognised. His face was burning with shame as he shifted his position.

In doing so he caught sight of Coralie Randal in the far distance. She was seated by the side of Rosamund, with Captain Grafton on the other side; and behind their chairs were several brown-faced young men and one brown-faced old man—an old man as straight as a ramrod, one of the thousands of ramrods which had been under his command in the old days of muzzle-loaders, percussion caps, and no commissariat. He was the splendid old veteran,—the Panther of the Punjab was the name by which he was known all over India,—the glorious leader of a cavalry force whose achievements had more than once saved India to England. His picture, appropriately engraved on steel, leading his men in one of his famous charges, hung framed between the pea-green curtains and the magenta sofa coverings and the spotless antimacassars of the years following the Mutiny.

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Young women, wearing graceful ringlets entwined about their ears, had prayed for his safety every night of their lives.

And now he was wondering if he could get Miss Randal a cup of tea.

Bernard Mott watched the group. He failed to identify the veteran in the silk hat with the dashing young cavalry officer in the steel engraving at which he had often gazed in his youth while his father expounded in shocking cockney one of the prophecies made in Hebrew several years before. But though he failed to recognise him, he did not fail to recognise the soldierly air of the veteran—the soldierly airs of the younger men, who modestly kept in the background while he was talking to Coralie.

They were all soldiers, he knew. They were all men with no more intelligence than is necessary for a fighting man; and yet the girl was listening to them with apparent interest, while he, Bernard Mott, the Socialist leader, the man who could hold an audience in fetters of iron by his eloquence—the man who had boldly faced a bishop and had driven him off the platform which he had hired—was forced to stand far away from her, among people to whom he was a stranger—but he forgot; he was not a stranger to all, he had been recognised by one of his old friends. . . .

But then it was that the sardonic little demon on his shoulder whispered into his ear its consolation:

“She cannot help herself, poor girl. She is forced to remain seated while these men are buzzing about her. She is thinking of you, and wondering if there is a chance of your appearing beside her. These

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men are paying attention to her; but it was she who paid attention to you."

The egoistic soothing syrup did its work once again. He could fold his arms—he had acquired the deportment of the revolutionary leader from a study of the portrait of Wolfe Tone at his trial. He felt himself to be the representative of the intelligence of the people as opposed to the brute force of the classes.

And then the polo ponies danced down the course for the start, and Barry Joyce raised his hand to his cap in salutation of the group about Coralie's chair. Bernard Mott did not know him in his riding colours at first. But he knew him when he saw Rosamund waving her handkerchief to him and when he heard the comments made upon the appearance of Sam Slick by some people behind him. It seems that Sam Slick was looking very fit, and that young Joyce would ride him for every ounce he was worth. Oh, yes; Sam Slick was all right, and would Lady Joan be inclined to agree to four to one on the field, bar Sam Slick?

And then he saw with amazed pain that two handkerchiefs were waving to the rider of Sam Slick. Yes, Coralie Randal had plucked out the wisp piece of lace that she carried in some mysterious pocket and was waving it as Barry Joyce went past to the starting post, and Barry seemed to notice that act of involuntary enthusiasm,—Mott hoped that her enthusiasm was involuntary,—for he raised a finger a second time in the direction of his cap, and the wiry dance of the polo ponies dwindled away into the distance.

In an instant every one in the crowd was standing, the men with uncovered heads. The strains of the National Anthem came from the band, and the smiling

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Representatives of a Royalty which never reveals itself otherwise than smiling drove up to the seats that awaited them in the inclosure. Mr. Mott had for a moment an inspiring thought. Would he not be the most noticeable person on the ground if he were to keep on his hat and seat himself? Would he not attract more attention even than Royalty itself?

He was fortunate in that this happy inspiration of his only lasted for a moment. He remained standing and removed his hat, just as the ordinary people were doing—the ordinary people, they were in his mind; all the other people were the ordinary people: the people who had led cavalry charges; who had reconstructed the governments of countries bigger than France; who had administered justice to people who had been overwhelmed by tyrannies; who had carried railways and telegraphs into the heart of Africa. Those were ordinary people in the eyes of Bernhard Mott; and he felt that in behaving like one of them he was conceding a good deal.

And it was this graceful concession of his that gave him a chance of witnessing with an unbroken head the finest pony-race that had ever been run on these grounds.

The people had resumed their seats after the entrance of Royalty; and two minutes later the ponies were off. They came down with a rush, all close together with the exception of one which had "gone lame," and the race was over before Bernhard Mott was fully aware that it had begun. He had an idea that a horse-race occupied about the same time as the Universities' boat-race—about twenty minutes or thereabouts.

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The race was over, and the air was alive with the sibilants of "Sam Slick," and Coralie was standing up close to the ropes, waving her parasol, while Rosamund and Algy Grafton, who had been able to restrain their excitement better than she had, leaned back on their chairs, laughing.

"Has he won? Has he won?" cried the American girl, who bore the name of the Irish chieftain whose prowess in taming wild horses had been sung by many a bard. She had turned from the rope to her friends, who continued laughing.

"Has he won? They are calling out Sam Slick," she said

"Of course Sam Slick has won; he was a dead cert from the first," replied one of the youths who had been standing behind her. "There goes the number '4' on the board."

"I'm so glad!" said Coralie, drawing a long breath, as she stepped back to her chair. Then she looked beyond her friends, and caught sight of Bernard Mott with his eyes fixed on her.

The expression which his face wore caused her to flush before giving him a formal recognition; for on his face was a look of profound sadness, the sadness of disappointment, with more than a suggestion of reproach.

Mr. Bernard Mott was plainly disappointed in her, and wished her to understand as much. In this he was entirely successful. She felt as a child feels who has been seen by its governess in the act of stealing jam.

She seated herself, and there was actually something of a guilty look on her face.

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The Indian veteran, the old Panther of the Punjab, said that it was really time for tea.

"You are a real sportsman, Miss Randal," said Captain Grafton. "They made a good finish, didn't they? You'll confess that you never saw a prettier finish?"

"I never saw a prettier finish, for the very best of reasons," replied the girl.

"You mean to say that you have never seen a pony-race before?"

"I never saw a race of any sort. I suppose that's why I was so excited."

"Very probably; that and—well, that one reason is enough by itself. And you never saw a horse-race before, though your ancestors were Irish and you lived in Kentucky?"

"A thousand miles from Kentucky."

"We needn't go into figures. Isn't Kentucky State included in the Union, blue grass and all? I don't think much of the States if they've left out Kentucky. I've known men who held a strong opinion that it wouldn't matter much what happened to the other States if only Kentucky was left intact. Ah, 'See the conquering hero comes.'"

The victorious rider of Sam Slick, wrapped in all his mufflers, came across the inclosure, bringing with him his friend, Monty Cliffe, who had come in third.

CHAPTER XX

Coralie congratulated Barry with extraordinary deliberation, considering how excited she had shown herself to be at the finish of the race. As a matter of fact, she said quite as friendly things to Lord Montague Cliffe. This made Rosamund angry; so while Algy was giving Monty a detailed criticism of the race, pointing out the shortcomings of some of the ponies and the mistakes made by some of the riders, she said to Barry, in a furtive whisper:

"You did very well, Barry, and that little hustle past Midge wasn't half bad. You rode Sam Slick for every ounce he was worth, and you sent Coralie clean out of her chair to grasp the ropes at the finish. Poor Coralie was quite overwhelmed with excitement."

He turned to the girl with his face alight.

"I'm glad you weren't disappointed," said he.

"Oh, no; I wasn't disappointed," said she. "I suppose one must be excited over one's first race. It was very foolish of me, I know."

"Foolish? I don't see where the foolish comes in," said Rosamund.

"It was foolish. I felt that the ponies were going to tumble all in a heap at the post," said Coralie. "That's really what was in my mind. I don't even know now why they didn't all come down."

"They're not made that way," said Barry. "Hallo!

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there's Mott just beyond those chairs. Have you seen him? I forgot that I gave him a ticket for to-day. He had a notion, you must know, that Ranelagh was like a Derby Day course, and he talked of blacklegs and welshers. Have you seen him?"

"Lord Monty did the most with Midge," said Rosamund. "Midge never would have been in the first three if it hadn't been for his good steering."

"I should like to know what Mott thinks of the whole affair," said Barry.

"I suppose that Cockroach managed to squeeze through for second at the post," said Rosamund.

"I expect he thinks the whole affair a waste of time," said Barry, musingly. Then while Lord Montague discussed with Rosamund some of the *nuances* of the pony-race, Rosamund's brother said to Coralie:

"I wonder if you feel bored by Bernard Mott."

She stared at him in the first shock of the surprise which the question caused her. It seemed to her a very surprising question. How could she know that his ability to interpret a girl's motives was so meagre that he had actually been led to attribute her refusal to dance with him a few nights before to her annoyance at being left talking all the evening at Lady Gastonbury's to Mr. Mott?

"I—bored by Bernard Mott?" she cried. "I—why should you ask me such a question? Was it not you who originally presented Mr. Mott to me?"

It occurred to him that there was in her voice a suggestion of throwing a certain undefined responsibility upon him.

"Oh, yes; I thought that he would interest you,"

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he replied. "I really feel sure even now that he does interest you, though you may not know it."

She stared at him again. He was surprising her more and more. He was assuming now that she was indifferent—more than indifferent to Bernard Mott.

That was why she said, with all the emphasis at her command:

"Do I not know it? Do you actually fancy that I do not know that Bernard Mott interests me more than any one I have yet met in London?"

She was perhaps rather more emphatic than she meant to be. And her emphasis was made more emphatic still by the momentary flush that came to her face.

It was his turn to be surprised; but he contrived to conceal his surprise better than she had done hers.

"Oh, I'm glad. I was a bit afraid that—well, I thought that at the—that you weren't bored, after all; or that I may ask him to join our party. The fact is that my sister—but she has her own notions—I know that Bernard Mott is not the sort of man who appeals to the ordinary girl."

"That was why you thought that he was likely to bore me?"

The little smile that she gave him took the sting out of the sarcasm suggested by her words.

"I never went so far astray as to fancy that you were an ordinary girl," said he. "I always knew from the first that—"

But here the veteran of the Punjab came up with the news that tea was awaiting Miss Randal at one of the small tables, and he hoped that she would allow him to have the pleasure—

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Before the party had begun to move, Barry had gone through the line of chairs to where Mott was standing and invited him to drink tea under the trees. But Mr. Mott did not allow himself to be easily persuaded. He shook his head gloomily when Barry broached the subject of tea, and then smiled—he often smiled gloomily. He said that he rather thought that he had seen all that he came to see at this place, so why should he not go back to his lodgings? He had work to do.

It was only when Barry assured him that if he refused to come, Miss Randal would feel greatly disappointed—yes, she had said as much to him—that Mr. Mott reluctantly consented. He hoped, however, that he would not be thought impolite if he hurried away after tea.

Barry assured him that he would do his best to place the facts of the case before his friends, so as to prevent them from attributing any discourtesy to him, and on this distinct understanding he accepted Barry's invitation.

It took him more than half an hour, however, getting beside Coralie. He had a notion that he had only to join the party strolling across the grass to get by her side; but in making his calculation he had not counted upon the strategy and tenacity of purpose of the man who at that moment was her companion. The leopard cannot change his spots, and the Panther of the Punjab retained in his old age more than a mere remnant of those qualities which had made him the terror of Pathan as well as Afghan. He had flung to Mr. Mott, when he greeted Coralie on coming up with Barry, a glance that made Mr.

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Mott feel that however successful he might be in driving bishops from their own platforms, he would not find it quite so easy forcing Coralie's escort from his position.

The veteran liked young girls to talk to when they were pretty, and he loathed Socialists, Vegetarians, and short-service faddists. He saw in a moment that "that fellow Mott" had come up with the intention of rushing the position. Patam Sing had also tried to do a little rush at Arradambad in the old days, and had been blown into small pieces from the mouth of a gun in the cool of the next morning.

Bernard Mott felt very much as Patam Sing did when the match was applied to the touch-hole—they had touch-holes in those days—of the gun whose muzzle was pressing against the small of his back, when the veteran got between him and Coralie, saying:

"My dear young lady, cold tea is excellent for a short campaign, but don't you prefer it hot in the afternoon, and not overcooked? Did you ever hear of a thing called tannin?"

He maneuvered her alongside Rosamund, and the position was saved. Bernard Mott was compelled to fall behind with Barry, and when the little tables under the trees were reached he arranged his forces so that he was at one side of Coralie and Captain Grafton at the other.

"Hallo," said Barry. "All the places are taken. We shall have to find a table for ourselves."

The General enjoyed his tea greatly, and Coralie found him extremely entertaining.

But she did not forget that Bernard Mott was at the next table, giving his host his frank opinion of

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Ranclagh. She knew that he meant to give his opinion to her also.

And he did, though not until half an hour had passed, and Barry had gone to see about the prize-giving with the General. His Royal Highness had as usual inquired after the General. Rosamund made one attempt to take Coralie quietly off to the chairs, but she had not the finesse of a trained strategist, and Coralie was not prevented from speaking to Mr. Mott when he stood up from the table with Barry. Rosamund was not even adroit enough to prevent her from following the party by the side of Mr. Mott.

"Could anything be more lovely?" said Coralie, as the afternoon sun sparkled upon the green of the foliage overhead, the green of the turf underfoot.

"It is beautiful—shocking," said Mr. Mott.

"Ah, I was afraid that you would not enjoy yourself," said the girl.

"You only did me justice," said he, sternly. "I was sorry to see that you allowed yourself to become as one of these people. I had great hope of you."

"Hope of me?" she faltered—actually faltered.

"I felt sure that you were sincere in your determination to become one of us—one of the workers for the regeneration of the world," said he. "I had a dream—was it only a dream?—that it might be laid on you to lift up this people to face the light; I watched you while you were watching the pony-race."

"I was very foolish," she acknowledged. "I allowed myself to be carried away to an absurd degree. But I had never seen anything like it before; and—well, Mr. Joyce was riding in the race; his sister

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was pleased—not that I did it to please her, of course; oh, no! I admit that I was genuinely carried away.”

“I thought if that young woman—pardon my bluntness; I acknowledge none of the artificial distinctions of lady and gentleman—”

“I honour you for your straightforwardness, Mr. Mott.”

“I thought if she only brought into our cause—the cause, mind you, of humanity—such enthusiasm as she gives to that petty thing that degrades rather than elevates mankind, what might not she accomplish? That is what I thought. It may have been a vain thought. What am I? An idle dreamer, perhaps. Yes, I have been sneered at as a visionary. I daresay I am one. Everything worth talking about in the world has been accomplished by those who were branded as visionaries. Still, I thought what I have told you; I thought that it might be laid on you—I thought that it might be that you were the one for whom we have been looking through the long night; and then—you took pleasure in a horse-race—nay, only a pony-race—a mere pony-race.”

He had no sense of humour, and he took it for granted that the majority of people were left similarly unendowed. His experience amply justified such an assumption.

She was downcast.

“I never saw such a race before,” she murmured, in the deprecating tone of a criminal pleading that he had never been before the court previously. “And besides—Miss Joyce has been so very kind to me.”

“Oh, please don’t fancy for a moment that I am blaming you,” said he, gently; even prophets have

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their gentler moments, and men of genius have hours in which they are almost companionable. "No, it is not for me to say that you are to blame. A lapse does not entail finality of condemnation. But let me implore you to beware. Let me entreat of you to watch your steps. Let me beg—no, I will ~~not~~ beg—I will not entreat—I will not implore anything of you—no; I will command you; for I know that you have long ago accepted me for what I am—the voice in the wilderness. I am nothing in myself; but as the instrument through which humanity becomes audible, I am something. Something? Nay, there is none greater than I, and you know it."

She looked up at the man. His eyes were gazing with a touch of wildness in them, the wildness of the visionary, who at all times and in all places has fascinated women and some men. But suddenly, with a deep sigh, as if his soul had gone forth into space and was returning to him, he flashed his eyes down upon hers. Their eyes met. She could not move her eyes from his.

"Tell me what I am to do," she said, in a weak voice.

CHAPTER XXI

"You remember the words that the prophet spoke to Esther, 'Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? If thou holdest thy peace at this time, then shall deliverance arise from another place.' " His early and forced acquaintance with every portion of the Hebrew Bible was invaluable to him. He had a good working knowledge of the least popular books, and so could make any garbled quotation free from the fear of detection. "When I saw you first, as beautiful as Esther, standing on the terrace of that place of shame—the place where every man seeks a seat only for the furtherance of his own ends—when I saw you standing there, the words of the prophet"—he took it for granted that Mordecai was a prophet, because he was a Jew of the Captivity—"the words which I have spoken flashed across my mind. 'Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' I saw that you were not as other young women; I saw that the Soul had come to you. A soul does not come to all women—it comes to but few men; but I saw your soul looking through your eyes, and I felt that you had come for us. The soul comes only through sympathy with the suffering of the world. Was I right?"

"I cannot tell," she replied, scarcely raising her

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voice—they had by this time seated themselves on chairs which were far removed from those on which well-dressed people were standing to watch the giving away of the prizes by the gracious hands of Royalty. "I cannot tell; I do not seem to see things clearly yet. I know that I have sometimes thoughts—hopes—longings—aspirations."

"That means you have sympathy with your suffering brothers and sisters," said he. "And I know that your highest aspiration is to be able to stretch out a hand of help to those who are suffering from the falsehood that underlies the constitution of society in these days. You think of it sometimes, I know. You think of the horror of it all: the strong trampling down the weak in this horrible struggle for life that goes on before our eyes. You would raise those who have been stricken down in this furious struggle, you would help on those whose feet are feeble. You know that it is laid on you to do this, and yet you can come here and take pleasure in a mere pony-race."

"Tell me what I should do," she cried. "Tell me what I should do. I am only a girl; but I know that life is a serious thing."

He had adopted the proper tone with her—the tone of command—of one speaking with authority. He that the woman's love of listening to the teacher and the preacher stood him in good stead. One-half of his audience at his weekly lectures were women; a large majority of them aimed at wearing a distinctive dress. They were pale and leaden-eyed. They loved his note of command. Countless centuries of subjection to man have made the note of command in a man's voice sound as natural to their ears as the snarl

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of the seal does to his female folk when he has got between them and the water. Man has got between his women folk and the water, and they like the note of command in his growl.

It would have been unwomanly for Coralie Randal to ask the man who was preaching to her what had brought him to Ranelagh, if watching a pony-race meant a lapse.

It would have been logical—unwomanly.

"Tell me what I should do," she cried.

But her imploration came far too soon; he had not nearly finished his appeal to her. If every schoolboy was to admit the accuracy of the enunciation of one of the problems of Euclid, the geometry master would be out of employment.

"Surely you must have felt, as I did, that it is laid on you to take part in this crusade of ours—the most important crusade ever entered upon by man. Brotherhood! Think what it means. Was there ever a word of comfort comparable with this breathed within the hearing of the world—the waiting world? The world has been waiting for centuries—centuries—for that word. The speaking of that word comes upon the ears of the waiting world as the lisp of the waters that were stirred by the angel's hand came upon the ears of the great multitude of impotent folk who lay around the Pool of Bethesda." (Once, again the course of early Methodist piety to which he had been subjected supplied him with an image.) "Whosoever heard the sound of the troubling of the waters was made whole. The angel came with healing in his wings. You, you, I felt sure, were the angel come to breathe the healing word in the ears of an

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impotent world—the impotent, waiting world; and yet you are here—here among the frivolous, the gay, the thoughtless ones of the most hollow society that the world has ever known. They cannot think, they have made life without thought or science. They would refuse the gift of thought if it were offered to them. Ah, you must pardon my vehemence—you will forgive—no; by heaven, I will not so far forget myself as to ask your pardon. I have spoken. If I were to take back a single word that I have said, I should be unworthy of my calling. I have spoken.”

He so far forgot himself as to be polite for a moment—only for a moment, however; the lapse was only for a moment. As a matter of fact, he had not really been polite; he had only approached the bounds of politeness.

“I do not ask you to take back a word,” she said. “I have felt the truth of all that you have said. I know that I have been living a frivolous and useless life since I came to England. And yet I only came to England to learn—to learn all that was best in the world. I wanted to be able to do something in the world—something helping—helpful to others. I did not want to take my place among the American heiresses—the words were hateful to me; and yet they always call me that in the newspapers—‘the American heiress.’ They are cruel—cruel!”

“Cruel,” he murmured, sympathetically. “You are an American heiress. Ah, I pity you indeed; you have all my sympathy.”

“Before the steamer that brought me to England had got out of soundings it was cabled over to England that I was an American heiress, and that I was

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on my way here. They even went so far as to double—more than double the amount of my father's money. Yes, they put it down at ten million dollars. I know for certain that if he has half the sum, it is the very most."

Not the slightest gleam came to his eyes as she uttered her bitter cry. She was looking at him too closely, and he knew it. The gleam that should have been in his eyes was in his heart. He shook his head sympathetically, as though to suggest that if he had known how cruelly she had been treated he would not have been so hard on her. In reality he was doing a series of sums in mental arithmetic. These are they:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \$10,000,000 \div 5 & = & \text{£}2,000,000 \\ \text{£}2,000,000 & = & \text{£}1,000,000 \\ \hline & 2 & \end{array}$$

£1,000,000 at 5 per cent per annum = £50,000.

The man who had never been in possession of more than £3 a week was in the presence of a girl whose father's capital yielded him, at 5 per cent interest, the sum of £50,000 per annum—say £1,000 a week. It was not, of course, £1,000 a week. The difference between £1,000 and what it really was would have meant a magnificent fortune to him—£2,000 a year. But what was this to take into account in the dividing of millions?

"My poor child!" he murmured. "My poor child! My poor rich child! When I think of the burden that has been laid upon you with this wealth I pity you with all my heart. I think of the Parable of the Talents. You have heard those words—the most solemn ever spoken: 'Occupy till I come.' I am a man, and yet I admit frankly that I would shrink

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from the responsibilities which the possession of your wealth entails. You will inherit a portion of your father's wealth, no doubt?"

"All—all—all," she cried, almost piteously. "I shall inherit it all; I have neither brother nor sister."

He put a hand up to his face and held it there for some moments. He seemed to be trying to shut out the vision of her burden, which she was compelled to bear. As a sympathetic impulse the action could scarcely have been surpassed. She was not surprised to find, when he removed his hand, that his face wore an expression of deep concern—an expression of sadness.

"The snare of it—the snare of it," he murmured. "I can feel for you with all my heart. It is too terrible a burden to be laid on any one. I can understand how you must be led daily to doubt the sincerity of the people who crowd round you. Fortune-hunters,—Mayfair is full of them,—needy adventurers, the scions of great families impoverished by their own recklessness, or worse. The town is full of them—gamblers on the turf, libertines, aristocratic loafers—these are the worst of all. I watched the crowding round you to-day. It is no wonder that you have no confidence in the motives of such men. It is safe to trust none of them. Is there any man more contemptible than the fortune-hunter? Pah!"

• His expression of disgust was very emphatic. She could not but appreciate it.

"That is the worst of it," she said. "I set out full of trust, but the few words which you said to me at Lady —"

"A kindly warning," said he. "I perceived in a

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moment that you were not as other girls are. I perceived that you did not quite understand your position, and I spoke. What, you do not fancy that I should be deterred from my duty simply because what I had to say might prove unpalatable? Did Jeremiah the prophet—"

It was when he was about to introduce the apt analogy of the prophet Jeremiah, who had given up some years of his life to the utterance of unpalatable warnings, that Rosamund, with Lord Montague, came up.

"Good gracious!" she cried. "Have you been here all this time? Why, you have missed the only serious part of the show—the giving away of the prizes. Oh, Mr. Mott, I am ashamed of you. I thought you really were fond of serious things and opposed to frivolous, and yet you allow Miss Randal to drink in all the frivolous part of the programme and deliberately hold her back from the profitable. Come along, my dear, and see Barry's silver bowl. It is a perfect beauty, only exactly the same as the four others he has won during the past two years, here and at Hurlingham. Oh, Lord Montague, let me present you to Mr. Mott—Mr. Bernard Mott, Lord Montague Cliffe."

She had carried off Coralie before Lord Monty had said "How'd ye do" to Mr. Mott.

"I've heard your name somewhere during the past week or two," continued Lord Monty, as they followed. Mr. Mott trusted that the man from the brewery who had recognised him an hour before would now see him walking on terms of equality with a lord, the son of a marquis. "Wasn't it you that drew Old

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Mole at the Ricketty Club Derby Sweep? No? Oh, well, maybe it was in connection with the Cigarette billiard handicap. No? Well, that's rum; all the same I could swear that your name cropped up somehow. Do you dine with this racket to-night, or do you go on to the Hurlingham crowd?"

Bernard Mott shrugged his shoulders, and Lord Monty stared at him. How could he know that he had not made himself intelligible to this Mr. Mott?

CHAPTER XXII

No, Barry Joyce did not invite his friend and patron, Bernard Mott, to dine with his party in the club-house, consequently—the logic was Rösamund's—the dinner had a chance of being a pleasant one.

(The dinner was a pleasant one, whether or not the absence of Mr. Mott contributed to so desirable an end.)

Barry felt that it would be essentially an empty compliment on his part to invite Bernard to remain to dinner when Bernard had only under protest allowed himself to be persuaded to remain to tea, his engagements for the evening being numerous and important. So Bernard had walked away; but not before he had said to Coralie:

"I will write to you. I feel that I must. Even at the risk of offending you, I must write to counsel you. It is laid upon me. You have been sent to me for this. Remember the solemn words of Esther, 'Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' "

"How good you are," she answered. "Oh, no, you cannot offend me, whatever you say to me. The truth can never offend me."

He knew that she would not be offended by anything he might say; he had put her to the test. When she had not been offended by the tone he had adopted

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in the past, he thought that he might safely conclude that he might say anything he pleased to her in the future.

So he walked away from the party at the club-house door. He was not quite sure if it would have been better for him had he said nothing to Barry about the absolute necessity to attend to his engagements this evening. On the whole he thought that it was wiser for him to forego the profit of an evening spent with her at this place. He felt that she would see in the solitary figure walking away, among the crowd of pleasure-seekers, but not one of them, something a good deal more impressive than anything that would meet her eyes during the dinner-hour.

And then he thought it would be no harm for him to do his bookkeeping by double entry, and to check his previous calculations.

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \$10,000,000 \div 5 & = & \pounds 2,000,000 \\ \pounds 2,000,000 & & \\ \hline & 2 & = \pounds 1,000,000 \end{array}$$

No, his mental arithmetic had not been wrong.

And in due course he struggled among men and women and babies and buns for a place on the roof of an omnibus. He laughed, with a certain amount of bitterness, as he mechanically got off the omnibus at Tottenham Court Road in order to save an extra penny, though he had to walk nearly half a mile farther to his lodgings. He had not much sense of humour, but he could not help being struck by the comedy of the incident of a man who had been sternly rebuking a girl who possessed, practically, $\pounds 1,000,000$ getting off an omnibus half a mile from his destination for the sake of saving a single penny.

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Fifty thousand pounds a year. One thousand pounds a week. That was equal to more than £142 a day. Since he had parted from Coralie she was actually £6 3s. 6d. wealthier; he worked out the sum exactly on the back of one of his lecture programmes when he got to his dingy lodgings. And before he had ceased thinking how funny—how sternly funny—the whole business was, he reflected that Coralie was another £12 6s. 8d. to the good.

He lay back in his horsehair armchair, taking care to tilt it on the offside to its weakest leg, and gave another laugh—a sort of forced-draught laugh. The whole affair was so very funny. Twelve pounds six shillings eightpence, exactly, since he had entered his lodgings; nearly twenty pounds since he had parted from her—more than six weeks of his income!

He continued his reflections until Coralie's increment touched £25. Then he rose with a sudden exclamation. He put on his hat and went to the Horse-Shoe Restaurant, in Tottenham Court Road, and ordered a three-and-sixpenny dinner and half a bottle of a cheap sherry ($\frac{1}{4}$). He smoked a cigar (4d.) as he walked down Holborn after this repast.

And by this time Coralie was £37—there or thereabout—to the good.

But while Bernard Mott was giving way to these unwonted luxuries, Coralie, all unconscious of the gourd-like growth of her riches, was seated at the table in the big window of the dining-room at Ranelagh, contrasting the inanities of Lord Monty with the wisdom of Bernard Mott. Only once was Bernard Mott's name mentioned.

“How does it come that we aren't wet-blanketed

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by dear Brer Mott, Barry?" asked Algy Grafton. "I must confess that I miss Brer Mott's sunny smile at our table."

"He's not the idle son of a gun that you are," replied Barry. "He's gone off to lecture somewhere to-night."

"Lecturing is the last refuge of the illiterate," remarked Rosamund.

"It's the only solid evidence we have of genuine incapacity," said Algy Grafton.

And that made an end of Mr. Bernard Mott, so far at least as was audible, for the evening. For the soup was brought in, and the window was opened, so that the room was flooded with the scent of the flower-beds and with the evensong of the blackbirds. Twenty or thirty other people were dining in the room, and many of them were young. It would be a mistake to suppose that the dining-room at Ranelagh is exclusively given over to the middle-aged or the past middle-aged. But though there were so many young people present, there was still a certain element of merriment at the tables. The pleasant laughter of the girls and boys was not noisy, but toned down in sympathy with the soft twilight that was slipping over the grounds—an opera-cloak made of sapphire-blue velvet, with here and there a subtle satin sheen in its depths.

The silver bowl which Barry had won was standing in the centre of the table, filled to overflowing—by order of the committee at the gracious suggestion of Her Royal Highness—with splendid roses of various shapes and dyes. Their scent would have drawn passionate music from the most self-contained night-

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ingale; but no nightingale was nigh, only the black-birds, and these, as the sapphire of the twilight showed the gold bead of a star or two, became more fitful and infrequent in the responses of their love-litany. One, but one only, fled athwart the open window, and began ~~to~~ call in its liquid contralto from a branch a few yards away. Not a word was spoken in any part of the room while the bird's voice was thrilling the air, not an ice-spoon sounded, not a liqueur-glass jingled. The bird kept on calling, in every phrase in its repertoire, pausing only for the answer to come from the dim distance.

When this bird passed away, only a fitful twittering came from the lawns. It was listened to while Barry's guests bent over their strawberries.

Coffee was ordered for the terrace outside, and the little party sat, with here and there a cigar alight, and here and there a cigarette, on the easiest of basket chairs, looking out over the still lawn, smelling the exquisite scents of the beds of mignonette and the hedges of sweet-pea. Darkness had not yet come to the sky, only one could perceive that the twilight was not an opera-cloak of sapphire, but a regal mantle of purple, studded with diamonds and opals and one mighty ruby—the ruby Mars, which was glowing just over the distant trees.

Coralie had been very silent during the dinner, when every one else had been talking and jesting and laughing. Somehow, Rosamund noticed that the girl invariably became thoughtful after being with Mr. Bernard Mott for any length of time, and she felt more indignant than ever with Mr. Mott. What business had he making a girl thoughtful?

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She found herself by the side of Coralie in her chair on the terrace.

"I hope you like this sort of thing," she said. "Barry thought that you might like a quiet little dinner like this after your rather busy week. I like it myself; one might be in the depths of the country."

"I can scarcely realise it all yet," said Coralie. "It seems impossible that just outside these gates there is the roaring town—the loud world. It is so perfect in its charm, I have felt once or twice—I don't just now—that it was all the work of your perfect caterers—one of those who never omit anything."

"Nice old place, isn't it?" said Lord Monty, who sat next to her. "I've often wondered who lived here before we bought it for the club."

"Oh, of course you know that it was the old home of the Kit Kat Club?" said Coralie.

"The what—Kit Kat? I never heard of it. I thought that cat shows were no older than the Crystal Palace," said Lord Monty.

"It had nothing to do with cats, softy," said a more erudite—a shade more erudite—youth. "I've heard something of the Kit Kat Club; they were painters or something. Weren't they, Grafton? They had nothing to do with kittens, had they?"

"Haven't a notion; they flourished before my time," replied Captain Grafton.

Barry Joyce was appealed to, and he, while readily admitting that he had once known a lot about the Kit Kat Club, was compelled to acknowledge that he had long since forgotten the elements of his early knowledge of the subject. He rather thought that it

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had something to do with painting, or was it a public house?

"Yes, it was a public house," another of the party announced with an air of authority. It was a very famous hostelry in the good old coaching days; it ~~was~~ handy for highwaymen, who simply swarmed on Barnes Common, or was it Chiswick? Anyhow, it was a well-known house, and it was certain that on the very terrace where they were sitting Jack Sheppard and Dick Turpin and the rest of them—"

"What are you laughing at, Coralie?" asked Rosamund.

"I'm afraid I'm very rude, but surely you know all about Christopher Kat and the Kit Kat Club, and how they came to Barnes Elms?" said Coralie.

"We are all as ignorant as education can make us," said Rosamund. "As ignorant as cockneys are of every place of interest within our borders. I remember reading all about the Kit Kat Club in a novel, but I could not say at a moment's notice whether it flourished at the beginning of the present century or at the end of the last."

"Do tell us, and we'll never forget," said Lord Monty, one of whose ancestors had actually been a member of the old club, and had his portrait painted by Godfrey Kneller in a Kit Kat.

And then Miss Coralie Randal, of Nokomis, Illinois, and Boston, Massachusetts, made these young men acquainted with the history of the club which they had frequented, and their fathers before them. She told them all that was known regarding the original Kit Kats, and she mentioned the names of some of the most distinguished members, and referred

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to some of their works. She communicated her knowledge so prettily, so simply, and so graphically, that all her hearers were impressed, and even the youth who was compelled to abandon the hostelry legend, with its property highwaymen, declared that he would come to Ranelagh again with an entirely new interest in the place. By reason of what he had heard; and Lord Monty suggested that it would be the simplest thing in the world to imagine the ghosts of those fine old chaps whose names the girl from Nokomis, Illinois, had mentioned prowling about the shady parts of the grounds, chatting together of the days of their youth.

And then fresh cigars were lighted, and the youths and maidens sat looking into the soft dimness of the woods beyond the lawns, hoping that peradventure it might be vouchsafed to them to catch a glimpse of one of those shadows of the past.

"After all, America was not discovered in vain," laughed Rosamund. "I am living in great hopes that with the increase of Atlantic liners we English people will yet come to know something of our own country and its institutions."

Coralie laughed for a moment, also.

"And I shall have to wait until I get back to our side before I find out what is the Westminster Bridge of Wordsworth's sonnet," said she.

CHAPTER XXIII

Lady Glasnamara was very indignant when she heard that Barry had agreed to go northward on some mysterious business connected with the "cause." The "cause" was the most mysterious business of all. She said, in her haste, many clever things, many bitter things, regarding Mr. Mott. Nearly all the cleverest sayings which are remembered against a man, or a woman, are bitter sayings. That is why they are remembered. Vinegar is a far more efficacious agent of preservation than sugar, and wit has been defined as something that makes one's neighbours feel uncomfortable.

Mr. Mott would perhaps have felt a little uncomfortable for a short time—just for the time it would take him to feel assured that he was a martyr—had he heard all the things that Lady Glasnamara said about him. She had even gone so far as to call him once again a very clever man. Her daughter had also accused him of being a very clever man; but Lord Glasnamara declined to believe so much evil as was spoken in his household regarding Mr. Mott. So far from Mr. Mott's being a very clever man in his design to send Barry "out of his way"—that was how Lady Glasnamara put it—he thought that Mr. Mott was a very shallow sort of Jesuit indeed—a sort of Ignatius Loyola done in putty.

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Lord Glasnamara's philosophy differed from other systems of philosophy in that it was founded upon a pretty extensive knowledge of men and women. He knew that while competition is the soul of business, opposition is the seed of a faith. He knew that a political persecution is the surest way of setting a lame leader on the legs; it is the Lourdes of the decrepit rebel. He had seen a good many nonentities persecuted into popularity by a foolish government. He had seen many a fad forced to take rank as a cult through being opposed. The socialists themselves were forced into prominence at the point of the bayonets of the guards in Trafalgar Square, and for a while they became a menace to the government of the country. It was a prison that made the fortune of a political fad worked by a political cad.

And Lord Glasnamara knew perfectly well that what is true of religion and politics is also true in matters of love; it is the obstruction in the course of true love that makes it interesting to all observers. It only then becomes picturesque; it only then begins to attract attention by a babbling.

Just at that moment, however, Lord Glasnamara knew that he had only to consider the matter from a social standpoint; but he thought that it might be as well to be prepared to meet it in the other aspects which it might assume. There was no question of love to consider just now; but there were boys and girls, and he thought it well to be prepared for the worst—or the best.

He declined to follow the advice of his wife in opposing the departure of Barry on his mysterious mission at what his wife called "this critical moment."

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He declined to allow that the moment was critical. How was it critical? he begged that Lady Glasnamara would inform him.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed his wife; "cannot you see that if Barry is out of the way—Coralie—oh, dear, dear! she will have a million, perhaps three—those American millionaires—do you suppose that any man, woman, or child remains in ignorance to-day of the fact that she will have three or four millions? There are adventurers—"

"Who should be got out of the way—eh? Then pack off your son, madam," laughed Lord Glasnamara, who had some sense of humour. "But at the same time, let me add, that if Coralie has the slightest *tendresse* for your son, the fact of your packing him off will only strengthen that feeling. Of that I can assure you."

The wife gave a little gasp; and there was a pause before she said:

"No doubt—yes; there's something in that, of course. Still—oh, there's nothing like propinquity."

"My good woman, if you want a young woman to keep in love with a man, my advice to you is to let her see as little of him as possible," said her husband. "Love is essentially a product of the imagination. If it were not so, the plain woman would never have a chance. As it is, however, they are the most easily loved and the longest loved of all women."

Lady Glasnamara had an uneasy feeling that her husband was speaking the truth. That was why she made a gesture of impatience, saying:

"Psha! You sometimes talk great nonsense, my dear. I say that Barry should not be allowed to go

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away. Nothing could be more disagreeable than his absence at this juncture."

"Disagreeable? Ah, well—perhaps," said her husband, with a shrug. "Disagreeable? Ah, well, you know that coal-tar is a very disagreeable thing, and yet it is from coal-tar that saccharine is made—saccharine, the sweetest thing on earth—next to true love."

"You would suggest that—"

"I would suggest that you say nothing to Barry, nothing to Coralie, and nothing more to me just now, for I am frightfully busy," said Lord Glasnamara, beginning to make notes on the papers before him.

"Very well," said his wife; "I will say nothing."

And having nothing more to say, she said it, and went on saying it.

The truth was that Lord Glasnamara's philosophy was scarcely proof against the possibility of people's whispering, as he knew they did whisper now and again, that the Joyce household were nursing—that was the word which lent itself well to a whisper—nursing the American girl with the millions for the heir to the titles and the Irish castle of the Joyce family. Already one impudent paragraph had appeared in one of the impudent newspapers; and there are so many impudent newspapers nowadays that Lord Glasnamara felt assured that the paragraph would be followed by another—perhaps a whole file; for impudence begets impudence. When it would become known that the Hon. Barry Joyce had left London in the height of the season—London and his own family and the American heiress to millions—even the most impudent of newspapers could not suggest that the

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Joyce family were nursing the American girl for the heir, giving no other young man of an adventurous nature a chance of falling in love with her.

Of course, in spite of all that he felt in taking this view of the matter, he did not look forward with any particular satisfaction to the flight of his son on a socialist mission to the north.

"I'm so glad to see that you are thorough, my boy," said he. "So many chaps nowadays take up a thing and go on with it for a month or two, but drop it like a hot potato the moment their fad threatens to inconvenience them. I'm glad that you are not one of that type. Go through with this thing now, and you'll not regret it. It will make you acquainted with men and their ways. It will be good practice for you. Have the—the—managers—the executive of your society formulated a programme for you? Take my advice, and insist on a programme in black and white."

"I've only got some general instructions," said Barry. "A good deal is left to my own judgment. I don't half like the business, of course; it seems to me that they could easily send a better man to Barkstone—a man with more experience of organisation and that sort of thing; but they don't agree with me. They have their minds made up to send me, and I think it would be mean for me to hang back."

"So it would, so it would," said Lord Glasnara. "They know what they are about in choosing you to do their dirty work for them."

"I wouldn't say that it was dirty work."

"Perhaps not. It's work, at any rate; and as far as I can gather, work isn't what your friends, the

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social leaders, live for. Loafing is more like—however, that's beside the point."

Yes; I think it's beside the point," acquiesced Barry, with a laugh.

"It is," repeated his father. "I think you have some able enough men on your side. They see the value of such a chap as yourself to associate himself with them when they are in a tight place. It's funny, isn't it, that the people of this island should still be more likely to be persuaded by a man with a title than by a man picked out of the gutter?"

"We don't regard a title as a disqualification for a leader," said Barry. "Neither do we regard the gutter as a disqualification for a leader."

"That's lucky for your leaders," said his father, drily. "If you did, there would be fewer of your leaders. Again, that's beside the question. You'll drop in upon us now and again, I hope."

Oh, yes; I daresay that I can steal a few hours from my duty," said the son.

He went off the next day, but not before he had received a few words of encouragement from Coralie.

"You have all my good wishes for your work," she said. "I admire you for your courage in braving the opinion of the people about you and going through with this thing."

"Oh, that's nothing," said Barry. "I hope that you and Rosamund will get on all right in my absence. Upon my word, I feel that there's a good deal of sense in Rosamund's reproaches; you heard her say that my duty was to think of my own household. Still, you know—"

"I know all," she said; and she really fancied

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that she did. "I know all; and I say that you are doing what is perfectly right in going. You are showing every one that you are in earnest—that you are sincere in your desire to help the world. You cannot tell how terribly disappointed I was when I went about here, finding that nothing in life except sport was taken seriously; but when I heard the voice of Bernard Mott on the terrace of the Houses of Parliament, I felt that at last I had met a true man, who looked at life truly."

"He takes it seriously, doesn't he?" said Barry, musingly. "He abused me like a pickpocket for riding Sam Slick at Ranelagh. He called it pandering to the vices of the aristocracy."

"He spoke seriously to me for allowing myself to be carried away by your race," said she, with a smile. "But I know that he spoke the truth. I never want to see a horse-race again. Do you?"

"I should rather think I do," said he, resolutely. "I don't go so far as Mott by any means. A race—well, I don't mean to cut off a race-meeting now and again."

She shook her head.

"You are wrong," she said. "Bernard Mott is right. You cannot serve God and Mammon. We are not sent into the world to spend our time on race-courses. Mr. Mott is, after all, the only sincere and fearless man."

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that, much as I respect Bernard Mott," said Barry. "I don't think that you quite understand us all, Miss Randal, if you will allow me to say so. There are a lot of things that are taken for granted among us. One is that a

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man has a right to hold whatever opinions he pleases on any subject. We don't abuse a man for liking to go to any race-meeting. We don't abuse a man for taking life seriously. It's a free country. Mott has no right to lecture you."

"I cannot agree with you," she said. "There should be no compromise in matters of principle. But from the first day I landed in England I have done nothing but compromise, except in the case of Bernard Mott. He's the only fearless man in England."

"Oh, I think that there are a few others left," said Barry, seriously. He refrained from smiling the smile of the superior incredulous. "There is a good deal of bravery left in England still, and the bravest men and women are usually those who do not boast of their bravery—most of them do their best to conceal it. But you'll soon come to know all about us and our ways. Meantime you can hardly do better than give up all your spare time to admire Bernard Mott. Good-bye."

She said "good-bye" to him, and the moment he left the room she was surprised to find that there were tears in her eyes. She could not understand how those tears had risen in her heart—if her heart, indeed, was their starting place. She had not been thinking a great deal about Barry Joyce. How could she think a great deal about a man who, while professing to be an adherent of the principles of Mr. Bernard Mott, could still show himself weak enough to ride in pony-races in the presence of frivolous idlers—idlers except in this seeking after pleasure?

And yet she found it impossible to deny, even to one so easily deceived as herself, that tears had come

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to her eyes on the departure of Barry. She had always thought of him as a very pleasant man; but he was in no way different from the scores of men whom she had met in London. They were all agreeable men, and they studiously refrained from formulating to her their views of life. She fancied they did so because they had no particular views on this particular subject. Life in their estimation should be lively. When at a dinner party, a few nights after she had first met Bernard Mott, she had ventured to introduce the name of the socialist leader to the man who had taken her in—she introduced it in connection with the subject of the seriousness of life—he had expressed the opinion that Mott was a bit of a windbag, and that socialism was tommy-rot.

To be sure, Barry, so far from thinking that socialism was tommy-rot, was himself a socialist, and was on the way to become an active socialist into the bargain; but he really was not very different in manner or mode of expression from the man who had displayed his own ignorance by suggesting that Mr. Mott was a bit of a windbag. And her knowledge of this fact increased the mystery of those tears of hers.

• CHAPTER XXIV

No tears had come to Rosamund on the departure of her brother. She was merely cross at his going. But she was very cross. Her philosophy differed fundamentally from her father's. Cases have been known of the existence of such a difference. And that was why when her father was quite placid she was quite cross. She was, moreover, cross with Coralie, whom, singularly enough, she somehow blamed for the departure of Barry.

It was then that Rosamund declared, with adequate emphasis, that of all the nonsense that had yet entered the heart of man, socialism was the most contemptible.

As Coralie had long ago made up her mind that all compromise on matters of principle was contemptible, she could not allow her friend to indulge in the luxury of being cross without rebuke, so she resolutely combatted the condemnation of socialism.

How could she do otherwise, when she had in her pocket at that very moment a letter covering three sheets of paper which she had received in the morning from an eminent socialist? The letter was written in the high falsetto of the street preacher, and its text was "No compromise."

Of course, Rosamund was not going to stand Bernard Mott's rebuke, even though transposed into the

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natural conversational key of Coralie; but before she had told Coralie this in plain terms, Coralie had branched off into a vigorous defence of Barry, and as she persevered in this branch of the subject, Rosamund's crossness waned and vanished as the girl paused for breath for a moment, with her cheeks rather rosy than otherwise and her eyes undoubtedly brighter than they had been previously.

Rosamund almost flung herself into her arms and kissed her, thereby admitting, Coralie thought, that she was completely vanquished by the logic of her argument in favour of socialism as a principle of life.

Rosamund even went so far in her enthusiasm as a convert to socialism as to refrain from saying that Bernard Mott was an odious man as well as a bit of a bounder. A bit of a windbag is invariably a bit of a bounder.

Coralie was so pleased with her victory—the first that she had ever won by reason and logic—that she frankly admitted that she and Rosamund would miss Barry terribly. And before a couple of days had passed she knew that she had spoken no more than the truth in this respect. They both did miss him terribly. There were so many places to which they could only go with a brother of one of them—and Barry had played so admirably the rôle of the good brother—to one of them? No, not only to one of them; to both of them.

The good brother is becoming rarer every day, Rosamund knew. She could not exactly define what the good brother should be nowadays; she rather thought that he should be as nearly as possible the opposite of the good brother of long ago. He should

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not be anxious to give advice to his sisters, as the old good brothers used to do; nor should he be over-ready to point out the bounders with whom his sister should not associate for even a trifling space. He should not be always ready to fight a man who might try to be familiar with his sister; he can only blacken the fellow's eyes. He should leave him to be appropriately punished by the sister; she can snub him.

Barry had been most useful, and before he had been absent for more than a week Coralie was ready to confess that it would have been nicer if he had remained at home. Still, of course, duty was duty, she said, resolutely. He had done well to go to Barkstone.

His absence, too, was the more provoking by reason of the numerous engagements of Lord Glasnamara at this time. Now and again, upon occasions when it might reasonably have been expected that he would take his son's place, he had telegraphed from Whitehall at the last moment a sixpenny excuse for not being able to leave the business of his department to accompany them to some place where they could not rightly go without a man in their party.

This was provoking—Lord Glasnamara meant that it should be provoking—and it caused them to miss Barry all the more acutely; Lord Glasnamara meant that they should miss Barry acutely.

It is scarcely necessary to mention in this place that in several excellent families among the English aristocracy the visit of Miss Coralie Randal to England caused some flutterings of hope to arise. These were the families who were unfortunate enough to still have on their hands those vast and splendid houses

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which their ancestors had built, in the days before architecture had died out in England, and when building materials and labour were cheap. One white elephant is sufficiently embarrassing to a man who can barely buy oats for a pony; but what is a whole menagerie of white elephants to such a man?

But in addition to the white elephants carved in Portland stone which have to be maintained, there are scores of other animals, not all gramnivorous, with huge appetites to be satisfied out of the revenues of the estate. They are the charges to be paid to the elderly sisters, under the terms of one will, and to the partriarchal and imperishable aunts and dowagers under the terms of another. There are the family lawyers, all with excellent appetites, and there are the money-lenders—sleek specimens of carnivora—to be satisfied.

And all this has to be done out of the proceeds of unlet farms, and wheat at something under thirty shillings a quarter.

It is not surprising that the arrival in England of a good-looking young woman with two or three million pounds—every American heiress has two or three million pounds—causes now and again a flutter in some of the great families who are blessed with grown-up sons who have not made fools of themselves—at least, not irredeemable fools. (The irredeemable fool is the fool who has got married before the right woman turns up.) •

The grown-up sons cannot earn money for themselves, except by allowing their names to appear on the first page—the title-page—of a prospectus, which, subsequently, one of the courts may decree to have

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been too sanguine in some passages and too reticent in others.

But the fathers and the mothers and lawyers know that the grown-up sons can marry; and thus it was that the newspaper paragraphs referring to the arrival of Miss Coralie Randal aroused the hopes of more than one proud English family.

Before she had been in England for a week it was well known that she could marry a duke if she wished, for the duke's mother wished it. The duke had caused his mother a good deal of anxiety at various periods of his life, so that possibly there was some truth in the rumour that she had hired a tug at Queenstown, and in that craft had gone to meet the Atlantic liner which was conveying Coralie Randal to these shores.

But whether or not that report was strictly accurate, it soon became plain that even the duke himself was not particularly averse to the scheme suggested by his mother for putting the largest of the family mansions in repair—to call this mansion a white elephant would be ridiculous; it was like a megatherium.

And next to the young duke there was a middle-aged earl, whose family had had a splendid past, but whose future could not be contemplated by even the most optimistic seer without misgivings. He thought that it was quite possible that he could win the millions of an American heiress; and, indeed, he had an excellent tailor.

Then there was a baronet of good family who was now free to marry again, the *decree nisi* which his wife had obtained having been made absolute. He trusted that as he had married before he had come of age,

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the transaction would be generously regarded by the world as something akin to a miss in baulk. This sanguine person read of the arrival of Miss Randal in England not without hope. He rather thought that it would be to the advantage of an American girl to marry him, divorce is so easy in some of the States.

It was Barry who prevented the last mentioned from being presented to Coralie, but he made no attempt to keep her from being annoyed by the many other representatives of the adventurous spirit of the middle ages—the duke was the only real filly in the running, some cynical observer had remarked in commenting on the case of Coralie. Yes, they all started fair, and Coralie was greatly annoyed as well as amazed to receive two offers of marriage before she had been in London for a week.

"They must be mad!" said Coralie. "How could any man who is not an idiot fancy that he knows a girl when he has only met her twice?"

"It is not that they don't know you; it is that they are afraid that you may come to know them," laughed Rosamund.

"In which case they would have no chance. Is that why they hurry?" asked Coralie.

"You have hit the nail on the head, my dear. But a girl shouldn't take her offers of marriage too seriously," said Rosamund. "After all, it was the gentlemen adventurers who first settled in America."

This historical suggestion was somewhat perplexing to the girl from America. That was why she laughed—after a pause.

But when these things were as they have been described, it can easily be believed that, although

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Barry Joyce was away from home and greatly missed by Coralie, she had still a sufficient number of dinners and dances and garden-parties and opera-parties, with dainty suppers to fill up her spare time and to prevent her from feeling that her life in London was absolutely stagnant.

And then a singular incident occurred, which broke the monotony of the season's vivacity, so to speak, and caused her to set about revising her opinions of Englishmen and their ways. She had seen so much of one side of the Englishman's character she had frankly confessed that she was disappointed with him. Had she heard the remarks, made now and again behind the friendly shelter of a hand placed against the side of the speaker's mouth, regarding the ridiculous departure of Barry, she would have been still more disappointed. It was generally assumed that Barry Joyce's flight was due to his discomfiture on his suggesting to the American heiress that she should marry him. Indeed, one of the impudent papers which every one detests—and reads—contained a paragraph referring to the disappointment of the young man, and agreeing with him that there was nothing like throwing one's self into hard work in order to get rid of the effects of an *affaire du cœur*, or, for that matter, an *affaire de l'argent*.

The incident which startled Coralie took place under her very eyes, at the entrance to a theatre. She had just got into the carriage with Rosamund and Lady Glasnamara, at the conclusion of the performance, and Algy Grafton, who had provided the box, was in the act of coming forward to the window to say a last word, when a man in the uniform of one of the

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Highland regiments sprang through the crowd of loafers and illicit cab-finders, and caught Captain Grafton by the collar of his coat, uttering a shout and a cry in the broadest Scotch dialect of, "By the Laird, I hae ye the noo—I hae ye—"

But at this point he dropped his hands smartly by his sides and gave a military salute.

Captain Grafton straightened his collar, saying:

"What the—"

At this moment, however, the soldier was in the hands of a policeman.

A crowd began to gather, and the one thing that Algy could not stand was to be the centre of a crowd. He stepped into the spare seat in the carriage.

"Howd him back—for the Laird's sake, howd him back," shouted the soldier. "I am Sergeant McGregor of the Gordons—howd him back, or get his name—ay, mon, get his name."

He was evidently greatly excited; he was a Highland sergeant, so that the London policeman was not altogether successful in restraining him. The theatre commissionaire was luckily a brother Scot, and he made an appeal to the man's better nature, so that the carriage was allowed to drive off without further detention.

The soldier was almost frantic.

"He's awa—he's awa—he's 'scapet me again," he shouted. "I hae nae e'en the chiel's name. What for are ye howding me? I'm telling ye that's it no drunk I am."

He shook off the policeman easily, but the commissionaire was not so easily got rid of. He held on to the soldier's arm.

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The soldier got six invitations from men in the crowd to have something to drink.

"Come inside the hoose, mon," said the commissioner, wheedling the man towards the entrance to the theatre. "In with ye. Here's a superintendent. There's no charge agin him, constable," with a confidential nudge. "The gentleman wouldn't wait to charge him. In wi' ye, my laddie."

He pushed him—still protesting—through the glass door, and the policeman cleared away the crowd.

CHAPTER XXV

Coralie was naturally greatly excited by this curious incident, so much of it as she had seen; but Rosamund only laughed.

"It is a very warm night, and the man is a drouthy Hielander," she said.

"No, he wasn't drunk," said Algy. "They are not teetotallers to a man, these chaps; but they are not drinkers to a man, as some of the bards who have taken the army under their protection would make the world believe. The poets who try to swing into fame holding on by a kilt don't know overmuch about the Hieland laddie."

"But why did he spring at your throat?" asked Coralie.

"At my coat collar? Oh, that's his fun; the Hieland laddie has his sense of humour," said Algy. "If you don't mind, I'll get out here. I'm going down Berkeley Street."

He stopped the carriage and said good-night once more, but with evident constraint, and the carriage drove on to the house in Grosvenor Gardens, where its occupants were due.

"What a queer thing to happen!" remarked Lady Glasnamara. "I don't think that an Irish soldier would have jumped at his collar as that Scotchman did."

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"Perhaps he wouldn't," said Rosamund. "One thing, however, is quite certain, an Irishman wouldn't let it go so easily as that Scotchman did."

"Yes, but what can it all mean?" said Coralie.

"Oh, my dear girl, don't worry about such a trifle," said Rosamund. "Any one could see that the man bore no grudge against Algy—no one does."

"How odd that none of us had the presence of mind to ask Algy what it meant," said Lady Glasnamara. "Pray try to remember to do so the next time you see him, Coralie."

That was all that was said on the subject. But Coralie at least allowed her imagination free play in assigning a reason for the curious conduct of the soldier. She had seen since coming to London a play which had opened her eyes, as indeed it had the eyes of a good many people, as to the double life led by some men, and it did not require her to leave her home in the States to form an opinion as to the very liberal view taken of life and its pleasures by the soldier at all times and in all ages. She recalled incidents in popular novels—written mostly by ladies—of wealthy libertines in the army—invariably the British army—who had run away with the sergeant's sweetheart, sometimes even the private's sweetheart. She had also read in books of the noble vengeance wreaked—that was the exact word—at considerable personal inconvenience, upon the cold-hearted scoundrel by the true lover, or perhaps the true brother. Treated dramatically, as she saw such an incident upon the stage, it became still more impressive.

She wondered if the Scotch soldier who had attacked Captain Grafton had a sweetheart—his lass,

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he would probably call her through the five acts and eight tableaux of the drama, whether he was a Scotch soldier, or one who had originally come from Bermondsey.

Or perhaps he had once a sister—also called in the affecting language of the melodramatist his lass.

Before she went to sleep she had come to take an interest in the "case," and to feel how sad it was that Rosamund and her mother should accept the incident with complacency—even with lightness. It was not surprising that Bernard Mott should have dilated as he did in the letter which she had received from him the previous morning—the second inside two days; oh, yes, he had faithfully kept his promise to write to her—upon the callous attitude of the upper classes towards crime.

When she came down to breakfast in the morning she found another thick letter awaiting her in Bernard Mott's handwriting among several which had come by the American mail. She read all her letters except this one while she was breakfasting *tête-à-tête* with Rosamund. Rosamund had only a newspaper to read, and she read it very languidly until she chanced to see a heavily headed paragraph:

STRANGE FRACAS WITH A SOLDIER—OMDURMAN IN
PICCADILLY CIRCUS.

She gave a laugh and an exclamation of surprise.

"They lost no time in reporting the thing, and they have done it in their most impudently intimate style," she cried. "Now, how on earth did they get the details of what happened? They must have had a reporter on the spot."

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And that is exactly what the impudently intimate newspaper had. A member of the staff had been at the theatre that night, and was in the act of leaving when the incident which he termed for journalistic purposes a "fracas" took place, and he was able to write a very interesting half-column about it.

He was, on the whole, quite accurate in his account of what had taken place. Only he laid emphasis on the snap-shot moments—those sections of seconds which the man with the kodak seizes upon. It appeared from the report that there was a terrific struggle between "the gallant officer in irreproachable evening dress" and "the burly Caledonian wearing the picturesque garb of the Gael." A casual reader might suppose that the combatants had been rolling about with their hands on each other's throats half-way to Hyde Park Corner.

"Probably for the first time in his life the gallant officer found it necessary to beat a retreat; perhaps such a strategical movement should, however, only be described as a falling back upon his entrenchments. At any rate, he drove off in the fortuitous shelter of his carriage panel."

The reporter then described his attempts to "elucidate" the cause of the assault; he had "interviewed" the Scotch soldier, whose name was Ian McGregor, sergeant in the Gordons, but it seemed as if he also had fallen back upon the "impregnable entrenchments of his native caution," for he had resolutely declined to make any statement to his interviewer. The interviewer, however, was able to make the most of the Scotch dialect in giving verbatim the phrases of the man's refusal, winding up with the significant words,

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"Ye need na be speerin' about the noo like a daft body, for I ken ye'll be hearin' a' about this wee bit affair afore lang."

"With this assurance," said the report, "the representative of the *Morning Glory*, having in a moment of abstraction forgotten to put the claymore which he usually carries in his waistcoat pocket before leaving his humble garret, thought it wise to abandon the position which he had gained within the portals of the Hyperion Theatre; but he can assure the readers of the *Morning Glory* that in the words of the Caledonian stern and wild, they will be 'hearin' a' about this wee bit affair afore lang.'"

Rosamund laughed, a trifle uneasily perhaps; but Coralie was grave, and seeing this, Rosamund laughed again, and this time without a suggestion of restraint, which shocked Coralie greatly.

"I would like to know very much what is on your mind at the present moment," said Rosamund.

Coralie did not seem to think that this was a suggestion to her to reveal what was on her mind. She remained silent.

"I know exactly what you think of 'this wee bit affair,'" cried Rosamund. "Yes, you fancy that there's more in it than meets the eye."

Coralie raised protesting eyebrows.

"I really only fancied that perhaps—" she began. Rosamund interrupted her lightly.

"You need not protest," she said, "for I am exactly of your opinion. Only whatever it means, it does not mean anything discreditable to Algy—of that you may be sure. You poor dear! you would believe anything bad about a soldier. You are more

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highly-civilised than I am. It's only the uncivilised woman who still loves the warrior and the hunter. And yet at heart—I wonder if you really do not secretly worship the Indian brave?"

"Only brains—only brains," said Coralie.

"Ah!" said Rosamund, with a curious emphasis that hinted at incredulity. "Ah, well, that being so, hadn't we better ring for the horses? We have time for exactly an hour and a quarter in the Park. Remember that Mr. Corncroft is coming to lunch. We must have some ideas ready to submit to him."

"I thought that he was to do the suggesting," said Coralie.

"My dear child, you do not expect an artist who works from a model to have ideas of his own. An ideal artist is an artist who has no ideas of his own. It is only the realists who have ideas, and we rather wish they hadn't; realism is the opposite to reality."

Coralie had no difficulty in perceiving that this sudden definition was due to a certain uneasiness on the part of her friend. Every one knew that Mr. Corncroft was fertile in ideas. That was why he had promised to lunch with the Joyces, in order to give Miss Joyce and her friend some counsel as to the costume each of them should wear at the Duchess of Glendower's fancy ball.

The splendid possibilities of the Duchess's fancy ball had been discussed in the circle of which the Duchess was the centre for the previous month, and already several newspapers had announced in their society column some of the costumes which were to be worn. It was well known that Miss Margot Dickson, who was "quite the prettiest of the *débutantes* this

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year," was to appear in the guise of Night. The Dickson family were quite rich enough to have purchased some imagination; and it was whispered that she would wear the celebrated Dickson diamonds—they had been heirlooms in the family for quite eighteen years—bespangled over her dress to do duty for stars.

Then it was known that the Countess of Eversleigh would appear as a Vivandière. She had a charming figure, which was greatly advertised. Lady Marie East was to use up all the family lace in the character of Dawn, and her daughter would thus be compelled to fall back upon the inexpensive habiliments of Little Red Riding Hood.

These were the ladies whose names appeared daily in the society column, and it was clearly understood that as their costumes had been published, they had a complete copyright in them.

But, of course, the *grandes dames*, who like a certain Bobs "did not advertise," thought it would be to their advantage to be reticent on the subject of their costumes; and so, for the best of reasons, did the Hon. Rosamund Joyce and her friend, Miss Coralie Randal. They had not yet made up their minds on the subject; and the society column of the *Morning Glory* had the previous day made this announcement.

Before ringing for her maid Coralie sat down in her dressing-room to read the somewhat bulky letter which she had received from Bernard Mott. This was the third bulky letter which had come to her from Mr. Mott within a week—since, in fact, she had given him permission to write to her.

She had come to look forward to his letters. They

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had the ring of sincerity in every line. They taught her. She felt, on reading any one of them, as one feels who has just come out of the presence of a master. They were serious letters, and they paid her the compliment of assuming that she was serious also—"the only woman in London with a serious purpose in life," was the phrase in which she was referred to in one of them. Believing as she did—as a large number of other people did—that Bernard Mott was a great teacher—a "coming Carlyle" he had been styled by a newspaper (for which he had written)—she could not feel otherwise than flattered by his compliments. Compliments are only valuable when they come from people who are not given to the paying of compliments; that was possibly why Jane Welsh agreed to marry her strenuous dyspeptic when he paid her the compliment of asking her; though it turned out that, after all, he only wanted some one to mend his breeks for him.

She read his latest letter with flushed cheeks. She seemed to hear his eloquent voice speaking to her. His writing, some one had said, was the writing of a man who, if he had a pencil to sharpen, would call for a battle-axe for the purpose.

When she had read the first page of the letter the flush on her face had deepened. She laid the letter on her table, exclaiming "Absurd!" Then she sprang to her feet and rang the bell for her maid. The maid had no difficulty in hearing that bell. There was more force of character in that ring than she had fancied Miss Randal to possess.

Miss Randal had a very pensive gallop with her friend in the Park.

CHAPTER XXVI

Of course Rosamund was too observant to fail to notice the pensive mood of her companion, and equally as a matter of course she made no remark upon it. She knew that Coralie was engaged in thinking out some question that perplexed her—perhaps the question as to the guilty connection of Captain Grafton with the "fracas in Piccadilly Circus," or rather, with the incident to which this "fracas" was the legitimate sequel, so that there was really nothing to be said on the matter. Coralie would continue her thinking, and the result would become known in due time without the need for any cross-examination.

They met several of their friends on horseback in the Park, but among them Algy Grafton was not, so that on the whole Rosamund returned home a trifle cross. She did not want to meet any friends, for she felt unequal to the duty of talking to them for Coralie as well as herself, and she had wanted badly to meet Algy Grafton.

They returned home sooner than they intended, so that Coralie had a good half-hour to spare before lunch. She spent every moment of this space with the strenuous phrases of Bernard Mott's letter before her. The phrases were undoubtedly startling in their fervour. They were shouting phrases. The man was constantly shouting for an axe to sharpen his stumpy

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pencil. If he had a nut he could not use the nut-crackers which ordinary people found adequate to their needs; he went about shouting for a Nasmyth hammer.

His latest letter was a whole engineer's workshop. The steam hammers thumped through it. The steam rivetters clanged, the steam welders banged, the steam punches punched. The whirl of it all was calculated to make the boldest lose his head, and Coralie with that letter before her felt like a girl in an iron foundry.

Five minutes before the lunch hour she laid the loud letter aside and went to Rosamund's room.

"I'm so sorry," said she, "but I'm not going to the fancy ball at the Duchess's."

"Nonsense!" said Rosamund. "We have already accepted the invitation. There are thousands of girls—even American girls—who would give all that they possess to have the chance of going to the Duchess's dance."

"I daresay," said Coralie. "I'm sure that I'm sorry—oh, so very sorry! but I cannot go. What does it matter? I am only one of a thousand, and a very small one at that."

"But why—why—why? At breakfast you said nothing about not going; on the contrary, you were looking forward to the coming of Mr. Corncroft to lunch. Don't be a goose, Coralie. Of course you'll come. 'Elaine'—yes, I'm sure that you would make a lovely 'Elaine.' Mr. Corncroft has his theories about the dress; it was he who designed Lilian Rose's dress as 'Enid' at the Railway Hospital bazar last year. Every one raved about it. The embroidered

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shield-cover—what a lovely bit of colour one can introduce there."

Coralie shook her head sadly—almost piteously.

"I should have thought of it long ago, I admit," she said. "I should have known that it was not for

me. But now I know in what direction my duty lies."

"How have you come to know it? Who has pointed it out to you? Healthy girls do not know in what direction their duty lies until some busybody points it out to them."

Coralie did not attempt to answer. She only smiled and looked towards the door.

Rosamund watched her very closely.

"Surely you can tell me what arguments Bernard Mott made use of to dissuade you from this particular dance," she said, quietly.

Coralie felt herself flushing all over.

"How do you know—" she began; and then she suddenly stopped for a moment. It was in a changed tone that she said:

"There is no reason for me to conceal anything. It was the letter which I got from Mr. Bernard Mott this morning that showed me what I should have seen for myself. If the money which people will spend on this one entertainment was legitimately distributed—"

"Thank you, my dear. I will not trouble you to go on; I know the rest," said Rosamund. "I've heard all those twopenny-half-penny arguments since I was in long clothes. An argument is the last resource of the man who knows he is in the wrong. I've never been greatly attracted to the Sunday platform with the banner in the Park. I'm disappointed in you, Coralie; but pray do not make me quite hope-

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less, by repeating those moth-eaten phrases. You have made up your mind to stay at home on the night of the ball?"

"Well, I'm not so sure about the staying at home," said Coralie, doubtfully. "But I can promise you that I'll not go to the ball."

"You don't mean to say that you have allowed Bernard Mott to make a different engagement for you?" cried Rosamund.

"Oh, no; only it so happens that on that night Mr. Mott is to address the United Societies of the Thames Valley and Bermondsey, and he has been good enough—"

"To offer you that as an alternative to the Duchess's dance. Good heavens! It's like offering a girl a duster as an alternative to a brocade dress—a bottle of rum as an alternative to a *vintage la rose*. But if you have made up your mind—"

"Oh, yes; I've quite made up my mind."

"Then we'll go down to lunch. What will mamma say?"

The question was soon answered. Lady Glasnara was alone in one of the drawing-rooms when the two girls went downstairs.

"We are throwing away a most *recherché* lunch, mamma," said Rosamund. "After all, Coralie finds her engagements will not permit her to go to the Duchess's dance."

"My dear Rosamund," said her mother. "No lunch is thrown away upon so excellent an artist as Mr. Corncroft. What's Coralie's trouble?"

"Conscience," said Rosamund. "Isn't it conscience, Coralie?"

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"I may say that it's conscience," said Coralie.

"Then I say let all the lunches ever designed go to waste rather than do anything against your conscience, my dear," said Lady Glasnamara. "The truth is that there's not half enough conscience *en evidence* nowadays. Maybe that's why we are so happy. Conscience is a sort of mental gout, isn't it? You must be careful of your diet; it may become chronic, and where will you be then?"

"She's got nothing unwholesome in the way of diet—spiritual diet—here," said Rosamund. "But if she will insist on sending out to every cookshop—here is Mr. Corncroft."

Mr. Corncroft, the distinguished artist who had for years made a specialty of Saxon and early British costumes, entered the room. He was greatly grieved to learn that Miss Randal would not require his services—that was not exactly the way in which the news was broken to him; Rosamund had more regard for his feelings, for he was a very sensitive man; but at any rate, he was made to understand that he might concentrate all his knowledge upon Rosamund.

He was greatly grieved, and he expressed his sorrow in a pose borrowed from Fra Angelico. Every one knew that his regret was a poignant example of Italian Renaissance—at least he hoped that every one would know it. He would have liked to turn an American heiress into something early Saxon.

"I hope that Miss Randal is not going to allow herself to be the victim of any one else's designs," he ventured to say after the lapse of a little time.

"Not in that sense," laughed Rosamund. "The

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fact is, Mr. Corncroft, that Miss Randal has come to the conclusion that if all the money about to be spent on the fancy ball were to be equally divided among the deserving people—"

"But isn't that just what is being done?" asked Mr. Corncroft. "Doesn't the holding of a great function such as this will be mean the distribution of a large sum of money among deserving people?"

"I think we had better not discuss the question at all," said Lady Glasnamara. "You see it would be mortifying for us to get the best of the argument, and then to find that Miss Randal remained of the same opinion still. We must put her on a diet of spiritual lithia."

Mr. Corncroft looked puzzled—not without reason.

"Gout?" he whispered.

"Of the soul," said Lady Glasnamara. "Let us go in to lunch."

They went in to lunch, and there was no further conversation on the subject of Coralie's conscience. Perhaps she was slightly disappointed that her deflection into rectitude was not taken more notice of. What is the good of becoming extremely good unless people take notice of it and remonstrate with one? It is almost as bad as being heroically bad, and yet not being referred to with bated breath for the encouragement of the unambitious. Coralie may have been slightly mortified, not with the mortification that grows into a halo, but that of a good girl who is happily not good enough to be without a touch of femininity. After all, the halo of the early Venetian saints probably grew out of a new way of doing the hair. The vanity which leads one to aspire to martyrdom, though

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not the crudest, is certainly the most enduring of all vanities.

Before lunch was over Coralie was able to make some valuable suggestions toward the complete realisation of Mr. Corncroft's design for Rosamund's dress, a fact which goes some way in showing that the growth of the halo is gradual. As yet Coralie's was downy.

She spent an hour of that afternoon in her own room writing a letter to Mr. Bernard Mott in reply to the one which she had received from him that morning. But when she had read what she had written she felt ashamed of it; compared with the rich mellow orchestral volume of sound breathed in every page of Mr. Mott's message, it was as a grasshopper's chatter is to the thunder's clatter. She felt sure that Mr. Mott would be ashamed of it also—she actually believed that one writer would be mortified because another had written worse than himself. Still she sent the letter to be posted. After all, it contained, she reflected, an acknowledgment of Mr. Mott's remonstrance on the subject of the Duchess's dance, and this fact might possibly help to console him for the thinness of her literary style.

That same night there was a family council of the Joyce household in regard to the position of Coralie. The tone adopted by his womankind amused Lord Glasnamara greatly. She acknowledged having received the advice on which she acted from that man Mott, the socialist. "Well, what of that?" asked Lord Glasnamara. Was not the advice excellent? the man was a bounder. Well, let him bound; so long as he continued to give such good advice as he had

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given in this particular case, he should be pardoned for all the bounding he cared to go through.

"It will end by Coralie's engaging herself to marry him," cried Rosamund, boldly coming to the matter which she knew all the members of the council had before them, though no one had ventured to utter a whisper regarding the dread possibility of the American heiress's marrying some one whose name was not Joyce. She considered herself to be distinctly bold in coming to the point; and she had therefore very good reason to feel mortified when her father replied, quite airily, and with a Treasury Bench smile—Lord Glasnamara was an under-secretary:

"And why shouldn't she engage herself to marry him?"

"What?" cried Lady Glasnamara.

"Oh!" exclaimed her daughter.

Lord Glasnamara looked as innocent as the photograph of a Persian cat.

"I ask you why she shouldn't engage herself to marry Mr. Mott, if it so pleases her?" he said, looking from his wife to his daughter. "I don't see why, because Coralie Randal is the only child of a very wealthy man, she should be shut out from the privileges which are enjoyed by her poorer sisters."

"The privilege of making a fool of herself?" suggested Rosamund.

"Even so," acquiesced her unabashed father. "Do you mean to tell me that there exists any more blessed privilege than that of making a fool of one's self? Few of us are rich enough to be able to accept that privilege without causing remark. And now that we are on this subject, I hope that you will

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allow me to remark that if either of you make a fuss about this or try to make her feel that Mr. Mott is a bounder, you will be making fools of yourselves. • Do you know how a faith is built up—how a government is consolidated in power? Don't you know that it is the opposition that does it? Give her plenty of Mr. Mott, as much as she can swallow, and he'll soon cease to have the charm of a delicacy in her eyes. That's how they prevent the girls who pack chocolate creams from constantly nibbling at those confections. Take my advice; tell her that Mr. Mott is a capital chap, and give her plenty of him. Now, don't go taking away the man's character by telling her that he is a saint, or that he's clever or good-natured or anything else that women know that women hate to have near them. If you have need to refer to Mr. Mott, don't disparage him in her eyes by saying all manner of good things about him. Be artistic. I'll ask him to dinner."

"Good-night, dear papa," said Rosamund.

CHAPTER XXVII•

"Hallo!" cried Lord Glasnamara the next morning as he joined the two girls at breakfast; it was Saturday, and his department allowed him the privilege of breakfasting with his family on Saturdays. The official mill did not grind exceedingly small; the proprietary of the mills that do is essentially different. "Hallo! what's all this about Algy?"

He had a morning newspaper in his hand.

"More about Algy?" said Rosamund, affecting an unconcern that she did not feel. "Oh, it's that impudent paper, the *Morning Glory*. More impudence and mock Scotch, I suppose! The kidneys are cold."

"Mock Scotch? I'll take a *Princesse*." He referred to the *aufs à la Princesse*.

"There is a prawn. The thing they wrote about Algy yesterday was full of mock Scotch—'wee bit body, 'gang awa' hame'—that sort of Scotch," said Rosamund.

"But they didn't mention Algy's name. They do so now," said her father.

• "More of their impudence."

"Yes. I haven't come across anything so impudent for a long time."

• "Throw the thing away and eat your *Princesse*. What does it matter what a prying paper says?"

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"Nothing. Only this is a Victoria Cross for Algy Grafton."

"A Vic—" She snatched the impatient prying paper from his hand and devoured it with her eyes. Then she burst into tears and made for the door.

Coralie saw that Lord Glasnamara had propped up the paper against a glass water-jug in order to hide his own tears from her. His ruse was a failure.

"A young woman in love is an awful thing in a house, Coralie," he remarked after a long pause. "A terrible thing—like a squalling baby; and yet I shouldn't like to live in a house with neither."

"I don't seem quite to understand what has happened," said Coralie. She had not touched the peach which was on her plate since Rosamund had rushed from the room, so great was her amazement.

"That bit of paper may help you out of your difficulty," said Lord Glasnamara, folding up the newspaper so as to display only the column with the big headings:

THE FRACAS IN PICCADILLY CIRCUS—THE SEQUEL.

AN ECHO OF OMDURMAN.

WHO SAVED THE GORDON PICKET?

Coralie eagerly read the three-quarter column which was headed with this fanfare of bugles, so to speak; and before she had reached the end of it she was standing up waving the paper over her head and crying "Bravo, bravo!" just as she had done in front of her box at the opera when the de Reszkes had thrilled the house.

Lord Glasnamara lay back in his chair and laughed, laughed until the tears were streaming down his face,

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and he had to follow the example of his daughter, and hurry from the room.

It was seeing this laughter of his that caused the tears to come to Coralie's eyes.

And there was nothing whatever pathetic in the narrative of Sergeant McGregor of the Gordon Highlanders, which he had communicated, with the permission of his commanding officer, to the enterprising chief of the staff of the *Morning Glory*.

That was the curious part of it all, and that was how the amazement of Coralie Randal increased now that she was left alone in the breakfast-room. Why should both Rosamund and her father have been overcome by reading this account of how Algy Grafton had done an act of splendid heroism in the Sudan? Why should she, Coralie, so far forget herself as to act as she had done, even before she had read the revelation made by the soldier? Why should she have one of her hands doubled up into a chubby fist even while she was thinking how foolish she had been? She had never had a particularly high opinion of Captain Grafton. She had always thought it rather a pity that such a girl as Rosamund—a girl who might, after due training, become the leader of a great social movement—should be content to marry so ordinary a man as Captain Grafton.

She thought that he had that light and feathery way of referring to the most serious problems of life which was the prevailing note of society that year, but which was very obnoxious to her. In fact he did not seem to differ in any respect from the majority of the young men whom she was in the habit of meeting at dinners and dances and garden parties and recep-

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tions—men who could not tell (she supposed) whether a Conservative or a Radical government was in power; men who didn't care whether the government was Radical or Conservative, or either, but who knew to a shade how certain horses had performed at their trials, how certain yachts were behaving with their new mainbraces, or something.

And yet—well, there was no doubt in her mind that Algy Grafton had done a deed of valour that the British army would not soon forget.

And yet for months no one knew that it was he who had done that deed. He had kept it a dead secret himself, and it would have remained a secret if it had not been for the quickness of sight of Sergeant McGregor in recognising in the bronzed-faced man in evening dress showing a lady into a carriage under the lights of the Hyperion Theatre, the officer who with an unerring revolver, and then with the rifle of a sergeant who lay on the sand, had kept a crowd of dervishes at bay when they had rushed in to spear the wounded of the Gordon picket one moonlight night outside Omdurman.

She read the whole account of the attack upon the picket in the moonlight. There was no mock-Scotch for the diversion of cockneys in the report of this transaction. It was given simply, and consequently with thrilling force, as it came from 'the sergeant over whose body Captain Grafton had stood with his revolver, then with the sergeant's rifle. She saw the whole picture of that wild fight in the moonlight—she heard the yells of the fanatics, the sharp reports of the bullets from their rifles; the smell of the powder was in every line that she read, the bugles were blow-

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ing through it, mingling with the cheers of the half-troop of cavalry who fell upon the now flying dervishes and cut them into shreds.

But when Sergeant McGregor and the other wounded Gordons had been carried to the hospital tent, Captain Grafton must have limped into his own tent, which was a long way off, and tried to bind up the wound which he had received from a dervish's spear in the ankle, so that it should be well the next morning. It was not well the next morning, and he was obliged to have it doctored, telling the surgeon a circumstantial story of being thrust at by one of the wounded dervishes as he was returning to his tent after dining with some friends in the Hussars. The surgeon said that the wounded dervishes were the very mischief, and made so good a job of the wound that Algy was able to fight with his battery a few days afterwards. But after that event something went astray, so that he had to use a crutch aboard the steamer that brought him to England, and he retained a limp as a memento, and would retain it for the best part of a year.

Now, as Sergeant McGregor had remained in hospital for some months, he had no chance of identifying the officer who had stood over his prostrate body, facing, single-handed, a score of the enemy that had come upon the picket; and as Algy had not waited for the return of the cavalry who had swept the dervish band off the face of the earth, the identity of the man who had performed the act of heroism continued a secret.

It would probably have continued on to the end of all time but for the fortunate recognition of Captain

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Grafton by the sergeant in a way that caused the newspaper reporter to head his account of the affair, "Fracas in Piccadilly Circus."

When Coralie had read the picturesque story told by Sergeant McGregor of the moonlight fight and flight, there flashed across her a recollection of the words that General Firebrace had said about the mysterious nature of his wound as he laid his hand upon Captain Grafton's shoulder at Lady Glastonbury's. It was quite clear that General Firebrace had had his suspicions regarding the wound, and that those suspicions had not been quite cleared away by any effort on the part of Captain Grafton.

Sergeant McGregor had, however, been far from reticent on this matter. The newspaper stated that, after ascertaining at the office of the Hyperion Theatre the name of the officer who had with three ladies occupied a box during the performance, Sergeant McGregor had gone to his commanding officer with the story of this discovery, and his commanding officer had gone to the office of the Adjutant-General, and the Adjutant-General had gone to the Commander-in-Chief. But greatest of the movements in this connection was the going of the special reporter of the *Morning Glory* to Sergeant McGregor, for this had resulted in a three-line heading at the top of three-quarters of a column of leaded matter, and also in a leading article, so short as to be almost certain of being read.

Coralie laid down the paper when she had read the leading article, which referred to the behaviour of Captain Grafton as being "characteristically English." She began to feel that she had not, even

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after her two months' residence in England, come to understand thoroughly the character of the people. She did not yet know what was "characteristically English," or the opposite.

And somehow her awakening to this fact caused her a little annoyance. It seemed to her that she had never read of so heroic a deed as that which Captain Grafton had done; but the heroism was not in his standing alone over the bodies of the wounded men, emptying the magazine rifle—that was the heroism which lent itself admirably to pictorial treatment; no, the heroism which she felt to be the greatest was the heroic silence of the man in regard to his own act of such bravery as should, she knew, gain for him the greatest reward that a soldier can win. Nay, he had not only kept silent about his act; he had actually made up stories to turn aside from himself suspicion of being the hero of that moonlight night.

And she had hitherto thought of him as a commonplace young man, possessing no element of greatness in his nature. To be sure, it had been communicated to her with bated breath that Algy Grafton had once ridden a zebra in Africa; and though every one about her, including her informant, an officer in the Guards, seemed to think that this feat entitled him to be placed among the few really great men of the country, the picture that he made upon her mind mounted on the back of a bucking zebra contained more elements of the ludicrous than the heroic.

But he was a hero.

And the mortifying part of it all was that she had never suspected him of being anything but commonplace.

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This thought kept reiterating itself in her mind with horrid persistency. The logical sequence of that thought was, of course, the impression that she had proved herself to be a poor judge of the character of the men whom she had met since she had come to England. She had never been led in the same way to a similar humiliation in regard to the men whom she had known in America.

The complexity of the character of the American man had been quite simple to her. The character of the American hero was simplicity itself. Could anything be less affected in its heroism than the itinerary of the American hero, kissing all the young women—perhaps all the old women as well—who came forward to do honour to him? The simplicity of the American hero was positively lurid—almost Puritanic.

Oh, no; she had found nothing complex in the men whom she had known in the States. But she did not think that she would have kissed the American hero.

And if she had misjudged Captain Grafton, what about the other men?

There was Barry Joyce, for instance—she was bound to begin with some one; that was her only reason for thinking about Barry Joyce; was Barry Joyce—

At this point in the course of her reflections Rosamund re-entered the room, very bright and smiling, and in her eyes the Light. The Light. Coralie saw it in her eyes, and its shining hypnotised the one who saw it, so that she flung aside all her own gloomy reflections, and laughed in pure joyousness of sympathy with the girl whose heart she knew was dancing with joy.

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She laughed, and waved her hands in bird-like circles about her head, with her head thrown back in the pose of the wild dancer who twines roses into garlands with the warm paces of her dance, until the festoons of roses ensnare the melody in their meshes, only to give it forth in the form of the scent that intoxicates all mankind.

She danced across the room, waving her hands and laughing just as Rosamund laughed—laughing until her laugh became a sob, and sobbing until her sob became a laugh. They caught each other's hands and kissed each other's cheeks. They stood back from each other, but still with their hands clasped, and sighed, only to burst into another laugh, with their heads poised with innocent archness, as birds poise their dainty heads.

. But when Lady Glasnamara entered the room and stared at them, they only laughed the more, until they fell upon her and smothered her with their embraces.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Of course the evening papers were full of it—with portraits. Biographical details were unearthed of both the heroes, for people soon got so confused with the accounts of the early life of Sergeant McGregor, and the Sandhurst experiences of Captain Grafton, that they had not quite made up their minds as to whether of the twain was the greater hero.

They took their choice.

And then there was a special edition all round—with four-inch black letters on the "Contents Bills"—of "Captain Grafton sent for to Windsor."

His Queen had sent for the hero, so he went to Rosamund.

She had waited at home for him; for she knew that whatever happened he would come to her.

And the funny part of it all was that neither of them during that hour which they had together made even the remotest allusion to that little fight in the moonlight in the Sudan. They declined to be so commonplace as to converse on a topic which every one else was talking about. They had too much on their minds to be able to say anything about newspaper topics or matters of that kind.

When Coralie came in with Lady Glasnamara, she, too, was unable to say a word, for Lady Glasnamara, after shaking hands with Captain Grafton, remarked:

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"This is the hottest day we have had this summer."

"That is exactly what I said," acquiesced Algy.

"I came in a hansom. But then all hansom are a bit stuffy."

"I saw the Garron-Towers in a brougham," said Lady Glasnamara. "Think of what a brougham must be a day like this!"

"Shadrach, Mesach, and Abednego," said Algy.

"I don't think that this spell can last much longer," said Lady Glasnamara. "Still—well, there was the first Jubilee. Do you remember those broiling weeks, Algy?"

"I thought it was the year after—or was it the year after that?" remarked Algy, thoughtfully, and wearing the expression of the man who revolves many memories.

"Nonsense! '89 was wet. We went to the Glastonbury dance, and half the cheepers on the moor were drowned; it was a wretched Twelfth," said Lady Glasnamara.

"I don't suppose we have any summers like what they used to have long ago," said Algy.

"What's keeping the tea?" cried Lady Glasnamara.

And Coralie sat dumb.

And Rosamund laughed.

And then the tea arrived, and Lady Glasnamara said, "Thank goodness," quite fervently.

He went away in due course, after talking a good deal with Lady Glasnamara on boracic acid as an antiseptic. There was a powder, also, which was a capital thing to have by one, and for that matter, an ointment, which had practically superseded everything in the same line.

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He went away, fighting a passage for himself through the serried ranks of the newspaper men who had tracked him to the house, and had been waiting for an hour to get from him a few particulars of his early life, and to learn if his sympathies were with the Low Church party at the crisis, as well as his views on Vaccination, and in fact, on any other topic of the hour.

A few days later it was officially notified that Captain Algernon Field Cranstoun Grafton, R. H. A., had been gazetted brevet major, and awarded the Victoria Cross, and so he passed out of the list of the topics of that season. The Australian jockey who had introduced a system of steering horses in a race as a boat is steered through the sea, with the reins tied to the tail and manipulated as the yoke-lines of a rudder, shouldered him out of the way. It stood to reason, people said, that a horse could race better without the irritating incumbrance of a bit.

And then a good many things happened to interest the Joyce family and their charming young visitor, for Lord Glasnamara insisted on Bernard Mott's being invited to dinner one night, and Mr. Mott came, and behaved wonderfully well, Lady Glasnamara said. Unless one had known that he was a socialist leader, one would really have fancied that he was a reasonable man like the generality of men.

And when people heard that Mr. Bernard Mott, the socialist leader, had dined at the Glasnamaras', they said that Lord Glasnamara was a most liberal-minded man, and they asked one another what he expected to get out of Bernard Mott.

And then Coralie met this same Mr. Mott, quite

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unexpectedly, at the house of a very wealthy widow, who had a house in Park Lane, with a spacious conservatory noted for the variety and charm of its shadows, and Mr. Mott talked with her in one of the deepest of these shadows, and Rosamund noticed that after that conversation Coralie was a trifle *distracte*, and curiously restless all the next day.

Rosamund thought it well to drop a line to her brother, asking him if he did not think that his duties among the waverers at Barkstone might be so regulated as to permit of his paying a flying visit to his family. To this letter she got a reply to the effect that he had been in communication with Coralie during the week, and he had promised to make such arrangements as would allow of his running up to town for at least one night, the night of the Duchess's dance and Mr. Bernard Mott's lecture. He had promised to accompany Coralie to the latter function, he mentioned, and his friend, Princess Zoutspanski (*née* Scooter, in Scootersville, Colorado) had been good enough to agree to act as chaperon upon this occasion.

Rosamund, when she read this simple statement, developed an unintelligible anger. She tore up her brother's letter and flung the pieces into the waste-paper basket in the study.

"I could not have believed that he would be so great a fool," she said, not in the low tone of one uttering one's thoughts aloud, but in a round voice of indignation. "He deserves to lose her, and if I know anything of girls who are idiots and men who are clever, he will lose her."

She detested Princess Zoutspanski, not merely because the Princess had won a unique place for her-

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self in society as the exponent of a religion which she had invented and which gained many adherents to the picturesque little dinners that she gave at her flat in the Cromwell Road, but because when Barry Joyce first appeared in London after his travels the Princess had asked him to drink tea with her.

Rosamund detested Russian tea. It was poisonous, she said; but Barry Joyce drank it until people alluded to him as the Archimandrite of the new faith.

And then the Princess had a purr.

That was how it came that she was angry when her brother mentioned the name of the Princess. But when her brother turned up on the day of the double event—the social event and the socialist event—she only kissed him and said that he was very good to come, and expressed a hope that he was having a good time at Barkstone.

She noticed that he was not enthusiastic in his references to the mission which he had been sent to accomplish. There were a good many pig-headed people in Barkstone, he declared, and she said:

"Yes, I heard that there were a good many socialists."

But Rosamund saw with some satisfaction that her brother had noticed the *distracted* and perplexed air of Coralie. She trusted that this air was due to a reaction against the fads of socialism, or the modification or exaggeration of socialism taught by Bernard Mott. She was, however, uncertain on this point; she could only hope for the best, and even doing this, she mentioned to Algy Grafton, left her exhausted, and far from being able to do justice to a consideration of the details of her dress for the Duchess's dance.

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It was only when she began to reflect upon the itinerary of Coralie and Barry, hour by hour, upon the evening of the ball and the lecture, that she acquired a certain measure of hope. At half-past eight o'clock Coralie and Barry were to drive to the house of the Princess and pick her up, carrying her with them to the socialist's lecture hall. After the lecture they were to return to the Princess's in order to partake of one of her dainty little suppers, which formed so powerful an auxiliary in the making of converts to the New Religion. But after the little supper, Barry and Coralie would have driven home together, and had, perhaps, a quarter of an hour's chat together before separating.

It was from this quarter of an hour's chat—they might even prolong it by another quarter of an hour—that Rosamund hoped much. She could not imagine that they would be such idiots as to waste the time discussing the possibilities of the socialist world, or even the absurdities of the Princess's New Religion. Still, she knew that it was not safe to take anything like this for granted. If the quarter of an hour were to be spent by two men, she knew that it would be absorbed by the Cult of the Colt; but in the case of two people such as her brother and Coralie, the Cult of the Colt would be superseded possibly by the Cult of the Coster.

Still, she had her hopes that they might talk of themselves. They had, at least, one strong bond of sympathy; they had both thrown over the Duchess. They could not but be drawn together when they sat talking about their renunciation of the Duchess.

It is doubtful, however, if Rosamund's imagination

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ever allowed its butterfly poise to dwell for a moment upon the possibility of Coralie's standing up to face Barry, during the first minute of their return after the Princess's supper, and saying in low tones:

"I am glad we are at home once more. I wanted to consult you about something."

He had noticed that her thoughts had been elsewhere during the greater portion of the evening. She had been stirred by the overwhelming rhetoric of Bernard Mott on the platform, but only for a time. And then at the Princess's she had not yielded to the influence of the Princess's purr, which played almost as important a part as the Princess's cook in the furtherance of the New Religion.

She was plainly in trouble, he thought; and wondered if Rosamund had been so foolish as to be clever in the presence of Coralie on the subject of the throwing over of the Duchess. Rosamund, he was well aware, could be very clever—very bitter on such a subject, and he thought that Coralie might feel this scheme of persecution. That he should fancy for a moment that the girl would be in trouble on account of being persecuted, however mildly, for conscience's sake, showed that he at least was not clever, whatever his sister might be.

"You wish to consult me?" he said. "I wish you had a better counsellor. What is it all about?"

"It is all about Bernard Mott," she replied, after a little pause. "Bernard Mott has asked me to marry him, and I don't know what to do."

CHAPTER XXIX

"Do sit down," he said, without the least break in his voice, and with a pause of a few seconds only, after she had made the revelation which she fancied would astound him.

Curiously enough, she felt a little irritation at his manner of accepting her revelation as though it were a matter of course. She had previously had just such a feeling when he announced to her his intention of going on his mission to the waverers of Barkstone.

"Do sit down," he said, and she sat down; but she felt sorry that she had told him what was on her mind. "Bernard Mott has asked you to marry him, and you are in doubt as to what answer you should make to him?"

"Yes; I am in doubt," she replied. "It may appear a very trivial thing to you, but for me—"

"Why should you fancy that it appears a very trivial thing to me?" he asked in a low voice, and perhaps there was the suspicion of a break in his voice as he spoke. • •

"Oh, I thought that you—that when I told you—ah, never mind."

She could hardly tell him that she had expected him to show his surprise when she made her revelation, or that she felt hurt because he seemed to take it as a matter of course.

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"If you fancy that I consider as trivial the most important incident in your life, you think a good deal less of me than I deserve," said he. "Do you fancy that I can forget for a moment that it was I who brought Bernard Mott to you first? You would never have met him if I had not brought him to you."

"Why did you do it?—why did you do it?" she cried, quite testily, almost indignantly.

He did not answer her. What answer could he make to her? Here was a girl, professing to be uncertain whether to say "yes" or "no" to a man who had asked her if she would marry him, and yet on the verge of indignation with the one who had first presented the aspiring man to her.

He was still silent.

"If you had not brought him to me, I might have—have—" she began. She was examining the buttons of the gloves which she had just pulled off her arms. She had an idea that he would suggest a conclusion to her sentence. He did nothing of the sort, unless his silence and his critical examination of the toes of his own shoes could be regarded as suggesting something to her. "I might have—oh, I mean that if I had not met Bernard Mott, I might—I should not now be in this trouble."

"I suppose it is more or less of a trouble," he said. "Are you not sure of yourself? Are you not sure of him?"

"Oh, I am sure of him," she cried, so quickly and with such vehemence as convinced him that she was doing her best to assure herself that she was sure of him. "Oh, yes; he is the only man I have met in England who has an object before him—a worthy—a

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noble object in life—the noblest that any man can have in life. • He is the only man who is in earnest. Do you tell me that the clergy are in earnest? Perhaps they are—some of them may be. But if they were all as earnest about their Christianity as Bernard Mott is about his socialism, England would be a different place from what it is to-day—the world would be a different place. I tell you that I am sick of the condition of things that prevails here. You are only serious in your search after pleasure.”

She had risen from the seat which she had taken in accordance with his suggestion, and had walked eagerly across the room, just as she had done once before when talking in the same strenuous way.

He did not leave his chair. He did not even watch her as she stood with her hand resting on the marble slab of the mantelpiece. She could not watch him. She was actually behind him. Possibly her taking up that position enabled her to speak so vehemently as she had spoken. But somehow it also tended to put him in the wrong. His attitude in regard to her while she was speaking was the attitude of English society in regard to momentous matters; they turned their backs upon their teachers and yawned as they examined how their shoes were wearing.

To be sure it was she who had caused him to have his back turned to her; it was she who had got behind him; still, it gave her a chance of denouncing more emphatically than she had ever done the nonchalance of English society, though she did not know any more than he did that she was only denouncing the nonchalance of the young man who, after being in the

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house with her two months, could still suggest to her to take a seat at the very moment that she had told him of receiving an offer of marriage from another man.

He remained silent after she had spoken—silent for a long and irritating time. She remained at the mantelpiece, tapping the cool slab with her fingers. They were warm.

But she could stand his silence no longer. She strode—actually strode, after the manner of the dramatic soprano—in front of him.

“Have you been listening to what I have said?” she cried.

“I have heard every word,” he replied. “But—you said you wanted my counsel.”

“And so I do—oh, God knows that I need some one to talk to! I feel so lonely here—so lonely!”

And she dropped into her chair, and sat with overflowing eyes in front of him.

He felt that he had never loved her until this moment—this moment, when she had come to him for his counsel regarding the marrying or the rejection of another man. Though he had taken life more seriously than the majority of young men, yet he had kissed many girls upon a good deal less provocation than this. Still, he sat there without making the least approach to her. He felt that she had precluded his ever telling her that he loved her. If only she had made it possible for him to tell her that he loved her, he thought he could promise her that never again would she feel lonely. The *solitude à deux* is not akin to loneliness.

As it was, however, all that he could say was:

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"I can feel for you, Coralie—believe me, I feel for you with all my heart."

The effect of his calling her Coralie for the first time was to her as if he had put out a hand to her.

And this was probably why she stretched out a hand to him after a silence of a second or two.

He took her hand, after a silence of a second or two, but he did not retain it in his own.

"Yes, I think I can understand something of how you feel here," he said, gently. "You came to England—the mother country, you thought it; and you were disappointed in all you saw. Nothing is as you fancied—as you hoped it would be."

"That is it," she cried. "Nothing here is as I hoped it would be. I fancied that I was going home. Think of the child that goes home and finds that no one there knows it, and that it knows no one. Perhaps it was my own fault; I daresay it was my own fault, but I have failed—utterly failed to understand anything of you here. I never felt it so strongly until I read about the splendid heroism of Captain Grafton. It came upon me as a revelation. I had always thought of him as one of the—the—usual, the ordinary men one meets. What, does it require a war to make the true character of the English apparent?"

"You and I are Irish," he said. "Our nature is different. When you come with us to Ireland next month, you will feel more at home."

"Ah, who can tell? who can tell? You are Irish, you say, but yet you—you are nearly the same as the Englishmen I have met. And Rosamund—I am no more to her now than I was the first day I arrived. Only once—once—I think I understood her."

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She looked at him curiously for some moments. Suddenly she sprang to her feet, crying: • •

"Oh, you are all the same—so kind, so courteous, so gracious, so considerate, but so trivial! Only one man have I met who looks at life as it should be looked at. Only one man have I met whose hopes, whose dreams, whose aspirations are the same as mine. Think what we can do—he and I! Is it too much to hope that between us—working together—walking together with one sole purpose before us—is it a vain dream that we may be able to mould the world—the great world of thought—to think with us? I mean to marry Bernard Mott!"

She flung herself into a chair at the further end of the drawing-room. Barry could hear how her breath came fitfully—with the suggestion of a sob now and again, through the emotion which was stirring her.

"Do you love Bernard Mott, Coralie?" he said at last.

What a time it was before she answered! His hopes grew with every second. Every second was as a grain of sand falling into the balance to weigh it down in his favour.

But then she said, in a low, resolute voice:

"I love Bernard Mott. Yes, I love a man who has shown himself ready to give up his life for the furtherance of—well, some people are sure to call it a dream. I don't call it a dream. Neither do you. And you know that the resolution which I have come to in this matter is a right one."

"Do you love Bernard Mott?" he asked her again, in precisely the same tone as that in which he had put the question to her a moment before.

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"Have you not been listening?" she cried, and real irritation was in her voice. She was leaning forward in that distant chair of hers. •

"I heard every word that you said; that is why I asked you if you love Bernard Mott." •

"How could I do otherwise than love him? What is it makes a girl love a man? Is it not because she sympathises with his aims in life, and is assured that he sympathises with hers?—because their aims, their hopes, their aspirations, are identical? Are not those things the basis of love?—not perhaps that love which foolish poets have rhymed about, but the higher—the truer—the nobler love?"

"There is only one sort of love," said he, "and that is love."

The laugh that she gave when he said this was a strange one; but still it could have been proved to be a laugh by any one who was capable of defining the true basis of love.

But Barry Joyce had his doubts of her laugh as well as of her love.

"My poor Coralie!" he said in a low voice. "Is it so bad as that?"

"As bad as—as bad—I don't understand you. But that is nothing unusual," she said. "And why do you offer me your pity?"

"Because you need it," he replied.

"And you called yourself—you will probably still call yourself his friend," said she, and there was a ring of scorn in her voice.

"That is why I say what I have said."

"You said that I needed your pity."

"And you have it. Any girl who talks of loving a

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man, and then goes on to define love—to say everything that love is not—is to be pitied. My dear girl, why should you come to me for counsel, when you have already made up your mind? What counsel does any girl need before answering the question which you have to answer, if she knows her own heart? What do you wish me to say to you? Do you wish me to say ‘Marry Bernard Mott’? I might be able to give you reasons that would satisfy any logician why you should not marry Bernard Mott; but love laughs at logic, and if you loved him, you would promise to marry him. On the other hand, I might be able to bring forward arguments to show that you should marry him; but if you did not love him, you would not, I hope, for his sake as well as your own sake, marry him. You say that you have made up your mind to marry him. Yes, but a girl’s mind and a girl’s heart are two different things. I can say nothing more to you. I am a poor counsellor, God knows.”

He went up the whole length of the room to where she was sitting, and put out his hand to her.

She took it—coldly and formally.

He scarcely pressed her fingers, and when her hand dropped from his, he stood before her in a somewhat awkward way. He seemed to be waiting for her to say something, and yet she appeared to fancy that he had not finished all that he meant to say; she fancied that there was a sign of words still to come upon his lips. She waited for those words to come. The situation was awkward.

At last he took a few steps away from her, and stood with his back to her and his hands in his

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pockets. A couple of minutes had passed before he turned to her, putting out his hand again, and saying, abruptly:

"Good-night."

She was startled for the moment, and then, very curiously, she had a sensation of being hurt.

"Good-night," she said, very coldly. There was a shrug in her voice that suggested that she did not think there was anything in his long speech that was worth while replying to.

But she seemed to change her mind when he had gone to the door, for she said—naturally, almost piteously:

"And I hoped so much from you."

He turned round.

"But why should you hope anything from me?"

"I will write before I sleep to-night and promise to marry Bernard Mott," she said, with more than a suspicion of defiance in her tones.

"I pity you, Coralie," he said, and walked out of the room.

She heard him say something to one of the footmen in the hall, and then she heard the door of the library close behind him.

She had been reading during the week a preposterous volume of sordid stories, told in the form of colourless and characterless dialogue, badly translated by some very foolish person from the Scandinavian—the foolish person prated a good deal about the Scandinavian drama, and then took pains to prove that there was no drama in Scandinavia. One of the dialogues was called "The Doll's House," and at the close an idiotic woman leaves the house of her con-

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temptible husband and shuts the hall door behind her. Bernard Mott had lent her the book, and had so impressed upon her the "fine touch" conveyed by the sound of the banging of the hall door, that she fancied at last that she appreciated the value of this chaste symbol.

The sound of the closing of the library door behind Barry Joyce gave her a curious thrill. She rose with a start from her chair and walked to one of the windows, and looked out through a corner of the blind upon the square. A single carriage was driving up to one of the houses, and she watched it until it drew up at the door, and a regal Cleopatra got out and ran up the steps, followed by King Arthur, carrying on his arm the dragon of the great Pendragonship.

They were the first departures from the Duchess's dance, she knew. She continued watching the carriage until it drove round to the mews. Then she dropped the edge of the blind, and walked very slowly into the centre of the room. She stood still for some moments there, and then, without receiving any warning of what was coming, she fell upon her knees on the floor, crying:

"Be with me, oh, God! Oh, good God, be with me!"

The next moment she was lying along the floor in a flood of tears.

CHAPTER XXX

It was a great success, Rosamund affirmed, sitting in white samite, mystic, wonderful, in the study. Oh, yes, the Duchess herself was very marvellous—Sir Walter had declared that she was the finest Gothic ruin remaining in England. The Duchess had appeared in the character—she actually made use of the word “character”—of the first Duchess (temp. Carolus II.), as depicted by Sir Peter Lely, and she wore her helmet as “Bellona” with dignity and grace.

Yes, Sir Peter Lely was responsible for many other designs, she continued, but not so many as Peter Robinson. Of course there were knights and nights—the former of Malta, with a sprinkling of the Holy Roman Empire, the latter with the billowy lace clouds, diamond stars, and three or four moons, an owl or two, and a bat, which people thought unlucky to wear.

Oh, yes; the minuet was really lovely, and no one minded Lady Margaret’s deflection from the stately rhythm, for the Duchess whispered to one or two of her safest friends—safest to spread the news abroad—that Lady Margaret had just engaged herself to Sir Passmore Jeffryes, so could not be expected to mind her steps. Lady Mary looked very pretty as “Anne of Austria,” but the loveliest of all was Miss Goldstein, who appeared as “Ruth”—corn sheaves, sickle, and all.

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"Oh, yes; it was a magnificent function, and Coralie was a fool to miss—unless—"

"Unless?" said Barry, to whose ear his sister was giving a graphic account of the great festivity of the night. The hour was 3:30 A. M., and Rosamund had danced several dances more physically exacting than the minuet, but she had, on entering the house, gone straight to the study to say that one word, "unless—"

She said it again.

"Unless— Well, you had a quarter of an hour with her here—or was it in the Aubusson drawing-room?"

"It was in the Aubusson drawing-room."

"For a quarter of an hour—or was it half an hour?"

"I believe it was nearer the half-hour."

"Oh! But a good many confidences can be exchanged even in a quarter of an hour."

"We certainly exchanged some."

"Who began it?"

"She did."

"Ah! What did she say? Were her confidences confidential?"

"Perhaps they were. You shall judge. She told me that Bernard Mott had asked her to marry him."

"Good heavens! Isn't it like his impudence?"

"Impudence? Well—"

"Of course you'll stand up for him. You probably stood up for him when she told you that he wanted her to marry him."

"Probably I did. At any rate, I told her that—that—I really quite forget what I did tell her. It was to the point, however, you may rest assured of that."

"If it was to the point, you must have told her



"And you are in love with her?"

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that Bernard Mott was a contemptible cad, as conceited as a—as a labour leader."

"You do go to extremes."

"But, of course, you were not foolish enough to say anything against him?"

"Of course not. But she has already written to accept his offer of marriage."

"Then you must have said worse about him than I could say. But she confided in you. She may promise to marry Bernard Mott, but she confided in you. You have the best of it up to the present—and then she went to bed?"

"No; I left her, and came in here. I think I did what was right. I could not trust myself. We were talking of love, you see, and those who begin talking of love invariably end in tears."

"I shouldn't wonder if she is lying on her pillow in tears at this very moment, unless—"

"Unless—"

"Unless she got over them during the first five minutes of your half-hour. And you are in love with her. Well, I suppose all girls must be fools once in their lives. Who is Coralie Randal, that she should claim to be exempted from such a list? She must buy her experience like the rest of her sisters. Only as she will have the income on five or six million dollars—maybe ten—she may have to pay a little dearer for it than the rest of us. And take my word for it, Gosssoon, whoever it is that a girl promises to marry, the man she confides in is the man she loves."

Barry shook his head.

"You needn't shake your head," said his sister. "The poor girl does not understand us, but she under-

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stands us a good deal better than she understands herself. She has been carried away by the tinsel glitter of Bernard Mott's high-flown rhetoric."

"All that glitters is not tinsel," said Barry.

"No; but most of it is," said Rosamund. "And it's not to a tinsel factory one would go in search of gold. You took her to a tinsel factory to-night, and before that you brought a tinsel factory to her. Poor little Coralie! I could see that it was bound to come. Some people in her own country have been talking to her of the responsibilities of wealth. I heard the other day that there is a society called the 'Association of the Daughters of Millionaires' in the United States—perhaps in Boston. They read papers to each other every month—perhaps every week—on the subject of the responsibilities of wealth."

"Some one has been hoaxing you."

"I don't know. Anyhow, poor Coralie came here with splendid ideas. She thought that so many people would be gathered together daily on Westminster Bridge to stand where Wordsworth may have stood to write his sonnet that the police would have a difficult job regulating the traffic. She wanted to see John Milton's house at Algate or Houndsditch, or somewhere. She wanted to go and see John Bunyan's house at Bedford, or somewhere. She had her theories about Lucy Carlisle, and Pym, and Lord Russell, and Titus Oates. She wondered if we lived near Smithfield, where the martyrs were burned. During the first fortnight that she was here you know that she never met any one who had been inside St. Paul's Cathedral. As for Wordsworth, Milton, Pym, and Bunyan—people thought it so funny for her to talk of

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Lady Carlisle. Thomas Carlyle had never been knighted, they assured her. No one could tell her whether Smithfield was east or west."

"Poor little Coralie!"

"You may well say so. And then bring your friend Bernard Mott on the scene to talk to her about our apathy for our glorious heritage, or stuff of that sort. But she's as much a woman as the best of us—or the worst of us; but she doesn't know it. She thinks that all the woman has been educated out of her, and that the daughter of an Irish peasant and the son of a pork-butcher have only to be allied in order to make wars and rumours of wars cease throughout the world. He told her that—I heard him—within the first half-hour of meeting her. Oh, I'm yawning my head off; I'm tired to death. I'm going to bed. Did I tell you that Lady Archie came as "Priscilla," the Puritan maiden? Fancy Lady Archie! And what's funnier still, she looked a Puritan maiden to the life. Good-night, dear old Gossoon. Don't forget that she confided in you. A girl never confides in a man unless—oh, I said all this before. Good-night. She is crying on her pillow at this moment."

This wise and fluent sister gathered her samite around her shapely body and held up her cheek for her brother to kiss. He was two inches taller than she was.

He kissed her on each cheek, and then murmured:
"Poor little Coralie!"

He was conscious of giving in those words his benediction to all womankind. He pitied them because he knew that they cannot afford to make

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fools of themselves, even once, in the world in which they live.

He had gone away the next morning before any one of that household was astir, though he did not even make the attempt to delude himself into the belief that the waverers of Barkstone cared the toss of a penny whether he returned or remained away from them. He could not delude himself into the belief that his mission was a success. His confidence in the sincerity of the leaders of the brotherhood in Barkstone was showing signs of tottering; and Bernard Mott's lecture had not tended to consolidate his belief in the practical value of the parent society, though he endeavoured to repel the thought that it was possible that Mott had sent him on the Barkstone mission to get him out of the way.

That was the thought which came to him the moment he found himself in the study on parting from Coralie in the drawing-room which was made lovely by the old looms of Aubusson. He stood leaning against the cool slab of the mantelpiece, feeling very bitterly in regard to his friend Mott. He knew at that moment that there was no real brotherhood existing between Mott and himself. The moment that Coralie confided in him that Bernard had asked her to marry him there rose in his heart the very words that his sister had spoken:

"Like his impudence!"

Now, that was scarcely the thought that would have come to him if there existed a truer bond of brotherhood between Mott and himself. Why should he feel that there was a *prima facie* case of impudence on the part of Mott because of his having

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asked Coralie to marry him? The perfect equality of brotherhood should make such a thought impossible.

And yet the feeling was there, as also were several other bitter feelings, and worse than feelings—logical thoughts. It was no personal feeling, but a reasonable thought that suggested to him the possibility that Mott had sent him to Barkstone simply to get him out of the way. And yet this had not occurred to him until, on recovering from the first shock which he received on hearing that the fellow had asked Coralie to marry him, the sentiment, "Like his impudence," had been in his heart.

He knew that he had no right, assuming the philosophical basis of the principles of his socialism, to feel startled because his brother Mott had presumed to ask Coralie to marry him. Presumed? Where was the presumption in the matter if he and Mott were standing on the same plane of equality as brothers? Impudence? Where was the impudence when subjected to the same test?

He was led to wonder if it was possible that the weak point in all schemes of socialism that purported to be practical was to be found in that elementary assumption of complete social equality between the members of the human race. Was it possible, also, that the individual feelings—loves and antipathies—of the individual members of the human race made it impossible for the ingenuity of man to devise such a scheme of socialism as should possess stability? Had man not yet got rid of those elementary feelings which he had inherited from his earliest animal ancestors, and which wage daily war against the higher life—the higher life that he called socialism?

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Was that simple socialism in which he believed not strong enough to withstand so gentle a shock as it had received when he learned from the lips of Coralie that Bernard Mott had asked her to marry him?

He had during the previous fortnight⁶ a pretty fair amount of experience of the effect of personal feelings in determining the policy of the branch of the socialist organisation at Barkstone. He found that petty jealousies, petty spites, petty business rivalries were at the foundation of the disorganisation of the brotherhood in the North. He had been amazed and grieved at all that he had seen in this respect, and he had addressed himself energetically to the task of reconciling all the conflicting individualities so as to make some show of cohesion among the brotherhood.

He knew that he had made some progress in this direction, but so little as to cause him to feel that his mission had been anything but a conspicuous success. And now he was conscious of having been guilty of precisely the same breach of brotherhood, so to speak, as the people among whom he had been labouring for the previous fortnight. He had allowed his own personal feelings to outweigh his judgment.

For when he came to consider the matter he could not but admit that there was nothing in the conduct of Bernard Mott that called for his condemnation as an impudent cad. He, the son of a seller of ham and beef—Rosamund, for the purpose of her argument, had alluded to Mr. Mott as a pork-butcher—had asked the daughter of a man who had been an Irish peasant if she would marry him.

Where was the impudence in that? Bernard Mott

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occupied as high a place, or as low a place, in that artificial social scale which Barry himself was constantly condemning as Coralie Randal. Where, then—even assuming that there was something after all in the artificial social gradation—was the impudence on Mott's part?

It actually came upon Barry Joyce with the force of a great shock that he had been acting all along, and that he was still acting—for he could not by much reasoning uproot that phrase, "Like his impudence," from his heart—on the assumption that the possession of great wealth conferred distinction upon an individual. This sentiment was, he knew, the popular one, the vulgar one—there is no difference between the roots of the words—and it had been his task for years, even when he was one of the leading orators at the Union, to demonstrate its absurdity, its wickedness. It was because every scheme of socialism is founded on a denial of the distinction of wealth, qua wealth, he had thrown in his lot with the brotherhood. His father said that, as the heir to an Irish peerage and an Irish estate, he was quite right to cultivate the philosophy of the impecunious.

And yet here he was, feeling that Bernard Mott, the son of Jonah Mott, and the recipient of three pounds a week, had been grossly impudent in asking Coralie Randal, daughter of Denis Randal, and the recipient (eventually) of perhaps a thousand pounds a week, to marry him.

And the worst of the matter was that he continued thinking it.

CHAPTER XXXI

Coralie had been weeping on her pillow at the very moment that Rosamund had attributed that sign of weakness—or strength—to her. She did not know why she had waked to weep, but she knew that she felt lonely beyond all impressions of loneliness she had ever experienced.

She had received in a letter from her father the previous morning an order on the Bank of England for a thousand pounds. Her dresses were probably getting worn out, he said, and besides, she might like to buy Miss Joyce a little present—nothing important, of course, he was careful to explain to her, nothing that would show purse-pride, but just a little thing that one girl might give to another—something at about five hundred pounds. It was rather singular that her sense of loneliness was intensified by reflecting upon her father's liberality.

Most men would find it impossible to be lonely while in the same room with a thousand pounds of their own; there is a certain vague sense of companionship in a round sum of money; but somehow it is different with women, and it was the thought that her father was thinking of her—the thousand pounds was a sufficiently tangible proof of this—that caused her to feel lonely, and—so at least she fancied, for she was not accustomed to differentiate in respect of cause and effect in all cases—to weep.

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But when she got downstairs shortly before eleven o'clock in the morning, and found that Lord Glasnamara was down, all her thoughts were concentrated upon the necessity which she felt to have an interview—an official interview—with her host. She had already had an unofficial interview with her host's son on the matter which, she felt, should be laid before Lord Glasnamara without delay. Only she had discussed with the son merely the incident of being asked by Mr. Mott to marry him. With the father she had to discuss the more important fact of having written a letter to Mr. Mott agreeing to marry him.

She wondered if Lord Glasnamara would turn her out of the house. She had read in more than one book of girls being shut up in their bedrooms by cruel fathers and fed on bread and water for making up their minds to marry men of whom—nearly always on insufficient grounds—their fathers disapproved. To be sure, Lord Glasnamara was not her father, he was only her host; but still—

Ah, that was where Bernard Mott had been wrong. He had suggested to her that the Joyce family were scheming to marry her to Barry. But all that was a mistake. Whatever Lord Glasnamara may have thought, Barry had not wanted to marry her.

Was the consciousness of irritation as this reflection came to her the result merely of wounded vanity?

At any rate, Lord Glasnamara greeted her with rather more than his usual graciousness, and congratulated her on the freshness of her colour.

"You are wise, my dear child," he said. "These entertainments that entail weeks of preparation for hours of inconvenience should be shunned. Fancy

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balls may be stimulating to the imagination—certainly the imagination of a good many people required to be stimulated before they could accept Mrs. Pepton in her costume as Diana of Poitiers last night—but they are not stimulating to the intellect. You got back nice and early from your lecture. Ah! I can see that you did not miss your night's rest."

How little he knew about her and her night's rest, Coralie thought. How little he knew that she was about to make a revelation to him that would change his gracious manner into one of sternness and coldness.

Yes; he would doubtless be very angry to learn that she had promised to marry Bernard Mott, but she would not flinch. She would stand before the outburst of his anger, and if he fancied for a moment that she would retract her promise by reason of his opposition, he would soon find out that he had formed a wrong estimate of her character. He might place her on bread and water at once; she would not flinch.

Meantime, however, he chose the right peach for her—the peach which he affirmed was under-ripe at ten o'clock and would be over-ripe at noon; that was the right peach. And so it was indeed. She made the most of the delicacies offered to her now that she had the chance; the menu of the room of the resolute maiden locked in by the obdurate parent is wanting in variety.

She faced Lord Glasnamara boldly when she had eaten her peach and some other delicacies of a more substantial type.

"I should like to say a few words to you before you go out, Lord Glasnamara," she said.

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He looked at her and laughed.

"You speak with the air of one who has a confession to make," said he. "A son who wants a preposterous cheque, a daughter who—but there is no predicting the confession of a daughter. Say on, my dear. Is it really a confession?"

"I'm afraid that it is," she said. "I cannot tell how you knew."

"What, haven't you been with us for some months? Isn't it about time you came to me with a confession?" he said.

"I told Mr. Joyce something of it last night," she said, somewhat uneasily.

"Now why should you confess to the curate when the parish priest is ready to hear you?" he inquired.

"I don't know," she said, rather weakly. "I don't know—unless—well, he and I have always been very good friends."

"And have you had a rupture with his father?" he asked.

"Not yet, but I'm going to," she said, in a more American way than he had ever heard her speak. "The fact is, Lord Glasnamara, Mr. Mott wrote to me asking me to marry him, and—after talking to your son—I wrote accepting him. There's a confession for you, Lord Glasnamara."

He raised his hands in surprise, and laughed quite pleasantly for some minutes.

She could not deny it, she was greatly disappointed at his manner of receiving her revelation. Barry had not been so bad as his father in this respect. He had not laughed; he had only inquired if she would not sit down.

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"My dear Coralie, you have my heartiest congratulations," cried Lord Glasnamara, stretching out both his hands to her, and when she had given him hers, which she did without an equal show of enthusiasm, drawing her to him and kissing her on the forehead in a delightfully paternal manner that disappointed her still more deeply. "Ah, you sly puss!" he continued, laying his hand—more paternity—on her head and smoothing her hair very gently in the way it should go. "Indeed, you are sly; for who could have suspected that you meant to make a conquest of that austere young man? Why, the general idea is that Mr. Mott is so devoted to his Cause that he disregards every voice, charm it never so wisely, that tends to take his attention away from the Cause. 'It is the Cause—it is the Cause, my soul'—that seems to have been the motto of his life; and yet—ah—this is just the sort of fellow to succumb at last. But you are a sly puss. Here is her ladyship; you can hide nothing from her. I know it; I've tried. My dear, here is the slyest—but there, you must work out your own confession."

"Good-morning, my dear Coralie," said Lady Glasnamara, who entered the room as her husband was speaking. "What is that man trying to evade saying?"

"It was my duty, was it not, to tell Lord Glasnamara in the first instance that Mr. Bernard Mott had asked me to marry him, and that I have agreed to do so?" said the girl.

"You have, as usual, my dear, taken a right view of your duty," said her ladyship. "I am sure he must have been delighted at the subject of your confession."

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"I did not disguise it," said his lordship. "This is not a time for dissimulation, as the great Pitt once said. Oh, no; but—"

"You are going to take the words out of my mouth," said her ladyship. "I know you are going to say, 'How delighted Coralie's father will be when the glad news reaches him.' Mr. Mott is so—so—well, there's nothing commonplace about Mr. Mott. And then that story of how he sprang all at once into notoriety—into fame—driving the bishop from his own platform. Oh, your father cannot fail to be delighted. Eh—what do you say, dear?"

"I'm not so sure that he'll look at the matter quite in that light," said Coralie, uneasily. "You know, Lady Glasnamara, that my father is a religious man, and—"

"Why shouldn't he be a religious man if he wishes? Men with so much money have a right to be religious if they please—or as irreligious; most of them prefer the latter," remarked Lady Glasnamara. "But you surely don't think that—well, now that I think of it, I have heard people say that the part played by Mr. Mott in that transaction was the part of an impudent fellow; but then, you know, he had his portrait in the halfpenny papers, and Lady Glastonbury showed him at her 'at homes.' Oh, people take a liberal-minded view of things nowadays."

"Father is narrow in some things still," said Coralie, looking along the tips of her fingers.

"You must forgive him for that, my child," said Lord Glasnamara. "You must not forget that he was brought up in Ireland, where respect to the clergy is part of the religion of the people."

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"Perhaps, on the whole, we had better not lay too great stress upon that feat of Mr. Mott's," said Lady Glasnamara. "We can manage to make him a *persona grata* in the eyes of your father by discreetly dwelling upon his capacity in other directions. His denunciation of war, for instance; now that—"

"You are unfortunate again, my lady," said Lord Glasnamara. "Every one knows that Coralie's father is the chief contractor for the food supply for the United States Navy."

"Now what is the use of quibbling?" laughed her ladyship. "Keeping up a navy doesn't mean going to war, does it?"

"No; but it's a great temptation," said his lordship. "I saw it stated that Denis Randal made two million dollars out of the Cuban business alone."

"It would be ridiculous to assume that because a man happens to be born on the confines of Tipperary he is bitterly opposed to every form of fighting," said Lady Glasnamara.

"No; I am sure Coralie's father, though an Irishman, has never been unpatriotically pacific," said his lordship, who, being an under-secretary (with aspirations) did a little flowery phrase culture. Hearing him make a speech was very like being at a horticultural *fête*.

"Mr. Mott will show him where he is wrong, never fear," said Lady Glasnamara. "Coralie must already be looking forward to her father's being set right by Mr. Mott."

"I, at any rate, do so, if she doesn't," said Coralie's host. "Denis Randal will take a good deal of setting right."

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"And he'll get a good deal from Mr. Mott," said her hostess. "For if a man is a stern and unyielding socialist when he has to live on a pound a week, how much more stern and unyielding will he be when he's married to the daughter of a millionaire?"

Coralie sat mute while this dialogue was going on between her host and hostess. She looked from one to the other. If they had not been so perfectly serious in their discussion of the splendid possibilities of Mr. Mott, she would have suspected them of irony. They were, however, quite serious; but she thought that their zeal on her behalf caused them to arrive at conclusions that were somewhat illogical. In fact, it was her detection of the want of logic in their conclusions that caused her for the first time to doubt the acceptability of Bernard Mott in the eyes of her father as a suitor for his daughter's hand—and the million dollars or so that it held.

She thought it right to interpose a less confident note in their duet of congratulation—their duet of jubilation, it might almost have been called.

"I hope that Mr. Mott—I hope that my father—" she began, then she glanced from her finger-tips to their faces. They were waiting, serious if alert, for what she was going to say. There was a look on the face of each that suggested something like surprise—pained surprise at the dubious tone in which she spoke. To talk of hope is to suggest doubt.

"You hope—" said Lord Glasnamara.

"I mean—well, you see, poppa is a bit old-fashioned," she said. "And he has given so much attention to business that—well, he doesn't look at a woman's place in the new order of things—in fact,

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he doesn't look at the new order of things at all. Then, like most Americans outside the Tammany ring, he is very monarchical in his tendencies; he's just besotted on the monarchy—so they all are."

"That only means that they are all true republicans," said Lady Glasnamara. "I must confess that at first I was inclined to think that your father would blame us for allowing you to be brought into close contact with a man wholly without means—"

"Pray be just, dear—just to ourselves—and Mr. Mott. He is not wholly without means; on the contrary, he has an income of three pounds a week," said Lord Glasnamara, with an air of indulgent reproof—women are so greatly given to exaggeration.

"Of course, I knew that he had something, or he would not be able to live in complete idleness," said her ladyship. "But even three pounds a week—"

"I don't think my father would mind about money, if—"

"Quite so; if an equivalent were forthcoming," cried Lady Glasnamara.

"And that's just what there is in this case—the equivalent is Mr. Mott," said her husband.

"Exactly—money—oh, there will be no lack of money. I don't suppose that you ever thought of it, Coralie, but the parents of so many girls who are heiresses ask for an equivalent to their money on the part of the men who are anxious to marry them. In this country a title still possesses some market value. Of course it's different in the States."

Coralie laughed.

"I'm not so sure of that," she said.

"What, you think it possible that your father had

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ideas on the subject of a title?" asked Lady Glasnamara, rather anxiously.

"I cannot say," replied Coralie, guardedly.

"Well, I must say that he might reasonably have had such ideas," said Lord Glasnamara. "I can't exactly say what are the latest quotations in Wall Street for dukes, but I'm pretty sure that they're not at a premium. On this side there's a slump in lords just now. Your father may be disappointed."

"He may be—fathers are sometimes unreasonable as well as mothers; but then he may like Mr. Mott—he really may. I have known people who liked him for a time. Oh, yes; I'm sure your father will make the best of the matter. He will see that there's no use crying over spilt—that is—oh, yes; your father is passionately fond of you, and he will tolerate a good deal for your sake."

Lady Glasnamara was very hopeful, and her manner of showing how hopeful she was made Coralie think of Bernard Mott in a new light. But she felt that in spite of Lady Glasnamara she would be ready to face even the hostility of her father in regard to Bernard Mott.

"We must try to reason your father out of his reasonable prejudices," said Lord Glasnamara. "Happily your father is not hopeless; no man with prejudices is—he is human, and we should never despair of what is human. But for heaven's sake don't let the matter get into the papers."

"Especially the impudent ones," said his wife. "Poor Mr. Mott would have a very bad time of it if they got hold of this business. I know exactly what they would say about him; they will say that sooner

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than do an honest day's work he showed himself ready to pocket his principles and marry the daughter of a man who has made some millions by the very means that the socialists profess to abhor most. The papers will deal with Mr. Mott soon enough."

"Meantime, you have our best wishes for your happiness, my dear," said Lord Glasnamara. "We must ask Mr. Mott to dinner again. I do hope that we shall find a spare night."

"Poppa may be reasonable," said Coralie, pensively. "I hope he will listen to reason."

"If he listens to reason, you'll have no chance," said Lady Glasnamara. "No, my love, you must hope that he will be amenable to some other influence. He will have reason on his side if he is hostile. But don't let us assume his hostility; he may never have heard the truth about Mr. Mott."

CHAPTER XXXII

And then Rosamund entered, and became most disagreeably cordial in referring to Mr. Mott. She said she was sure that he would be happy; and she, too, threatened to find a night on which they would be free to ask him to dinner.

And then Lord Glasnamara found that the day was getting on and that he must be getting off. There was certainly nothing of the rôle of the inexorable guardian about him—the guardian who cuts the household loaf and sends up a thick slice with a mug of cold water to the chamber in which he has locked the young woman who wishes to marry the ineligible man of her choice.

He pressed paternal kisses once more upon Coralie's forehead—he even went so far as to kiss his own daughter in the exuberance of the moment of parting.

His daughter, who was more of an artist than he, thought that he went just a little too far—that he slightly overdid the part he was trying to play. She noticed, however, that he did not allow his exuberance to extend to his wife; he had still some sense of artistic restraint.

"You have lain awake half the night," said Rosamund, looking straight at Coralie, and Coralie started and stared at her. "Yes; you would have been

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more profitably employed, my beloved, if you had accepted Mr. Corncroft's design and come with us to the Duchess's. I slept as sound as a top—one of the old-fashioned tops; the new ones don't sleep. Had you a good lecture?"

"A good lecture?" said Coralie. Then she suddenly remembered. "Oh, yes; the hall was crowded."

"The hall—the Aubusson drawing-room, you mean," said Rosamund, with a little laugh. Then she turned to her mother. "I got a letter from Bertie," she said. "His ship will be paid off on the fourth of August, and he will be with us at the Castle on the sixth, for at least two months. I think that Coralie will like Bertie."

"Your younger brother who is in the navy?" said Coralie. "Oh, yes; I think I am sure to like him, although he is in the navy."

"He will teach you to sail a boat, and you'll never forget him," said Rosamund.

"Don't neglect to write to your father by the first mail, my child," said Lady Glasnamara, as Coralie went to the door. "I suppose you mean to send him a photograph of Mr. Mott. You will, of course, have the good sense not to send him the one with the tousled hair; there's no use in arousing all a man's latent prejudices in a moment."

"Perhaps there's not one published without the tousled hair," suggested Rosamund. "Mr. Mott's admirers would not fancy they had got the value of their shilling if the tousle wasn't there."

"You are not one of his admirers, at any rate," said Coralie.

"Oh, yes, I am. I have always said that he was

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a very clever man, and now he has proved that I was right," said Rosamund.

"The mail goes out to-day," said Coralie, and in another moment Lady Glasnamara and her daughter were left alone.

They looked at each other for a few minutes, and then Rosamund laughed.

Her mother began to weep, leaning back upon her chair.

Rosamund went to her side and put her arms about her, saying, in the soothing tones that one applies to a child:

"Why should you be so foolish, you dear old thing? Heavens above us! What is there to cry about, anyway? Didn't you see that the thing was coming—that it was inevitable? How do you fancy that a girl is to find out that a man is a bounder unless by engaging herself to marry him?"

Lady Glasnamara certainly thought that there were other and less circuitous ways of compassing that knowledge, but she did not arrest her weeping to combat the theory suggested by her daughter.

"I had set my heart on it—I had set my heart on it," she murmured through her tears. "She was so nice, and Barry, I could see, took to her as he took to no other girl. Oh, what a fool he was! Mott, Bernard Mott, who could ever have fancied that such a—such a—curiosity—a common man who tousles his hair and gives lectures—and she will have a million—perhaps two. But her father will never consent. I shall write to him by this very mail—ah, why were we liberal-minded enough to allow Barry to bring him here? This should be a warning against liberal-

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mindedness—but her father will never consent. Thank heaven, there are some people left in the world who are not liberal-minded—and there will be another reduction of rent before the end of the year—I'm sure Barry was fond of her—you told me so. Oh, he must be fond of her. I was so careful never to say anything that might show him how eagerly we all wanted him to marry her. Think of what even half a million would be to us—and think of it all going to that contemptible fortune-hunting wretch! Oh, dear, dear!"

"I can't for the life of me think of a penny of it going to him," said Rosamund. "It's folly not to trust in Providence, though now and again it looks as if the Irish land-owners had passed out of the calculations of every power."

"And yet have we ever neglected going to church, except when the weather was *too* dreadful, or when that Mr. Glendower was going to preach?" asked the elder lady.

"But I've noticed Providence and the boulder before now," said Rosamund. "It's very funny. It should tend to check the advance of atheism among the cultivated classes. The boulder has a stroke of luck—he fancies that it is luck—and forthwith he bounds with the best of them. He thinks that the day of the boulder has come, and he loses his head without delay, and bounds so clumsily that he alights upon the corns of some solid man, and the solid man acts on the impulse suggested to him by Providence, and catches the boulder by the collar—it may be a low collar fastened to a flannel shirt—and throws him some distance, or else breaks him across his knee.

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Don't talk of Mr. Mott's luck until Denis Randal has given him his daughter to wife."

"He won't—he mustn't—he shan't."

"Of course not. I admit that recently Providence hasn't looked much after the millionaires, but don't fancy that, for all that, as the Scotch song goes, Denis Randal will give this woman to be this man's wife."

"You have faith? Well, I hope it may not be misplaced. But how about asking him to dinner?"

Then it was that her daughter explained to her that the scheme of asking him to dinner could be made quite consistent with the designs of Providence in regard to the bounder.

"I frankly confess that when papa talked of asking that man to dinner a few weeks ago I did not quite see the psychology of it," she continued. "He said, you will remember, 'Give her plenty of Mott.'"

"I recollect. But we had to share him with her," complained Lady Glasnamara.

"That was a small act of self-sacrifice. Papa was right; we'll give her plenty of Mott. Even partridge—and Mott isn't a partridge."

"A partridge? No, a flamingo."

And perhaps the flamingo may be regarded as the bounder among birds.

But while her friends and patrons were discussing her future and its impossibilities, Coralie Randal was sitting in her dressing-room gazing very thoughtfully at the outside of another letter which she had received in the morning from Bernard Mott, and which she had read before leaving the room for the interview which (she hoped, though she did not suspect so)

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would consign her to the nineteenth-century equivalent of the locked chamber door and the diet of bread and water.

What a manly letter it was! It told her that he had been overcome at the thought of his boldness in putting that momentous question to her in his previous letter. Sober thought had convinced him that he had been too bold. He implored her to forgive him—to forget that he had offended, and to refrain from cutting him off from the inestimable boon of her friendship—only her friendship, he asked for nothing more. To ask for more were madness—madness!

“Your friendship has been a strength to my fast,” he wrote. “The thought of it has strengthened me hourly at the plough. You remember how the angels fed the prophet, and he went in the strength of that food forty days. The forty days of my life are not yet over—the days of my fasting—my abstinence from the world’s food in the form of the joys, the delights of this world; but I feel that in the strength of the food of your friendship I shall reach my goal, even though the days of my fasting should become years. Child—child—for God’s sake do not cut me off from your friendship! Do you know what it would mean to me? Starvation—starvation. Spiritual starvation—spiritual despair—spiritual death.”

It was a manly letter, she felt. It was the letter of a man who took a modest view of his position in life. He thought he had been presumptuous in asking her if she would marry him. That showed how modest he was. (That the girl should really have such a thought, and she did have that thought, showed, at any rate, how modest she was.)

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And then he had not shrunk from the responsibilities involved in helping her to spend all the money that would one day be hers!

That evidence of his self-abnegation affected her deeply. How grave he had become that day at Ranelagh when she had told him how rich—how terribly, how appallingly rich—she would be one day. He had hidden his face at the thought of her wealth, just as Elijah had hidden his face—no, the parallel was not complete; she could not imagine how it had occurred to her. At any rate, he had put his hands before his face as if to shut out from him the awful vision of her heaped-up dollars. And then he had offered her his sincere sympathy.

She remembered the look that had come to his face when he removed his hands from before it. What was it like? Oh, it was an expression of infinite pity—of infinite compassion. It was such an expression as his face might have worn if she had told him that all her relations had died of consumption, and that a great physician had told her that something of which she had been complaining was the most certain symptom of the malady.

A short time before he had been uttering a passionate censure of her conduct in regard to the pony-race which had just been run. Rebuke had been in every tone of his voice—in every glance of his eyes. The expression upon his face when he removed his hands convinced her that he felt he had been hard on her. One must naturally feel some remorse when, after strongly rebuking a child, one learns that his father and mother died of consumption and that a

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doctor has just detected the symptoms of a hollow in one of its lungs.

But after hearing all about the weight of her wealth, he had still not shrunk from the responsibility involved in its expenditure.

And now she had before her that last manly letter of his, in which he confessed that he had been presumptuous in asking her to marry him, and professed to be perfectly satisfied if only she would still extend her friendship to him.

Was she conscious of a certain lack of ardour on her part as she sat down to her escritoire to write a letter to him that should form a fitting reply to his manly confession? The legitimate answer to a manly letter is a womanly letter, and she wrote him one that was more womanly than she thought, or than he thought, it to be. But the want of ardour was in that letter. It was not the sort of letter that is written to her lover by a girl locked up in her chamber, who has just dined off bread of affliction and water of affliction because she will not swerve from her affection whatever her stern guardian may do to her.

She was suffering from the restless, acute disappointment involved in the acquiescence of her host and hostess in her acceptance of Mr. Mott's proposal of marriage. Their cordial agreement with her decision was disappointing—almost humiliating to her.

And yet if any one had told her that her feeling was the result of her descent from a long line of Irish ancestors, every one of whom rejoiced in a strong and bitter fight, she would have felt still more profoundly humiliated.

And then Rosamund, who had never professed any

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admiration for Mr. Mott, treated her to the most benign of smiles, with now and again a certain feathery pelting of a thistledown banter—the banter which is composed of all the silky fibres of the thistle, but without a trace of the prickle. And Brevet-Major Grafton, V. C., who dropped in about tea-time, treated her as if she were about to make what she had heard spoken of in some drawing-rooms as a “splendid match!” People might say what they pleased about Bernard Mott—and a good many people were pleased to say a good many things about him—still, Major Grafton thought that Mott had a bit of a devil in him.

All this was, of course, very flattering to her—indirectly; but it was not what she looked for from these people. She thought that Major Grafton, at least, was certain to say something derogatory in regard to Bernard Mott; but instead of doing so he had said that Mott had a bit of a devil in him. She did not write to her father that day, though she knew that she should have done so. She waited until her lover should have come to her. Something that he might say to her would, she thought it possible, have to be embodied in her letter. Her lover did not lose any time in coming to her. She saw him alone in the room that was called the study. The room to which the head of a household retires to have a doze either before or after dinner is invariably called a study. Mr. Mott was very grave during this interview, but not more grave than she was. There was no kissing or clasping during this interview. On the contrary, there was a great deal of talk, and talk is fatal to

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any manifestation of the affections which a boy has for a girl, and which a girl sometimes returns.

Affectation took the place of affection during this interview between Bernard Mott and Coralie Randal.

The orator occupied the rostrum, and his oratory encircled her like the sound of the buzz-saw of one of the lumber-sheds of her native land. It made an effective substitute for the encircling arms of the true lover; but it caused her to have an uneasy feeling that no true lover had been present at that interview. Still, the thought which he impressed upon her was that they were going to walk hand in hand through the world, making flowers spring up where before there had been weeds—scattering seeds that would eventually become trees of the forest, whose arms would spread forth like the arms of one in the act of pronouncing a benediction upon all beneath. "Yes, all people of the earth would draw nigh to the projecting branches of the forest which he and she would plant, and all who drew near would find protection and hope and joy of life.

"For the healing of the nations," he cried, as another recollection of the Bible texts which had been hammered into him in his youth came back to him—they were always coming back to him at effective moments. "And then the nations shall cease warring among themselves, and all shall be united in the blessed union of brotherhood. Coralie, you and I shall accomplish this. We have been brought together for this. I knew it from the first. There never was a doubt in my mind, and thank God that I was presumptuous. 'For the healing of the nations.' "

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The orator held the rostrum against all comers—against Simplicity, against Tenderness, against Truth; and as for Love, Love fled, as he always does at the sound of the orator. The little god either flies the moment oratory begins, or goes comfortably asleep to the sound of its periods.

But all the same Coralie Randal's face flushed when the orator departed. Those words, "for the healing of the nations," were sounding in her ears. She had a feeling that she had been in the mind of the writer of the Apocalypse.

That was why she was slightly offended when, on Rosamund's returning from paying a few visits—none of them of any importance except the one to her dress-maker—she put her hands on her shoulders and said:

"And he didn't kiss you, after all."

She considered that she had a good right to be offended, and so she had. But Rosamund made up, in a measure, for the shortcomings of Mr. Mott, and Coralie was left laughing.

A few days later Mr. Mott came to lunch, and before the meal was quite over Barry drove up inside a hansom, and walked into the dining-room, to the amazement of every one present.

"I've chucked it," he said, by way of explanation.

"Chuck'd it?" cried Rosamund.

"I've chucked Barkstone," said he. "Barkstone and brotherhood—I believe that I've chucked them both. I think I'll try a risssole."

CHAPTER XXXIII

Rosamund expressed herself greatly pleased at the step taken by her brother in regard to the brotherhood. Her mother was greatly pleased also, but having been brought up in an atmosphere of diplomacy—she was the daughter of an ambassador—she did not think that it would be courteous to express herself to this effect while a leader of the brotherhood was at the table.

The leader of the brotherhood smiled sadly—indulgently.

"I am disappointed," he said, gently. "I felt certain that you—well, that you would not look back having put your hand to the plough."

"He not only looked back, he came back, thank goodness!" said Algy Grafton, who was one of the lunch party.

"I am disappointed," said Bernard, ignoring the flippancy of the last comment.

"I should have been disappointed if he hadn't chucked it," said the flippant commentator. "Why should he have taken the trouble to work for a degree in order to do the work of a gerrymanderer? Come, Barry, old chap, tell us how you chucked it. Was there a fight—I don't mean a newspaper fight, I don't mean an oratorical fight; those fights are only for rowdies, chaps who don't know how to use their fists. I mean a regular, legitimate fight with—"

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"Oh, no; there was no fight like that," said Barry, and he addressed himself to Algy exclusively, as if the matter was one that interested him only. "No, there was no fight."

"Ah, I'm sorry to hear that," said Algy.

"No; but there was very near being one," said Barry.

Algy shook his head in disclaiming the dangerous theory suggested by Barry that nearly being a fight was almost as good as a fight.

"I think you would do well to keep your explanation of what occurred until you come before the Central Committee," said Mott.

"There was a sweep in that racket named Salter," said Barry, speaking to Algy, as though Mott had not opened his mouth. "A chap with a very bad record; he was the local organiser of the brotherhood."

"Naturally," said Algy, in polite assent to the logic implied in the connection made by Barry.

"He was a fellow without the remotest ability, with no claim whatever for the position he held and still holds except that he gets all the workingmen as quickly as possible, and as deeply as possible, in debt to him—he has an interest in a whisky shanty where credit is given—"

"On certain terms," suggested Algy.

"That was the crux between us," said Barry. "I had a bit of a row on with him before I had been acting as Special Commissioner for more than a week. I couldn't understand his game at first, not being aware of the whisky business. I had to stand out against him, although one important section of the brotherhood—they were organised by the man's brother—threatened to withdraw their support from

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the parent organisation and start another for themselves."

"With a handful of sulphur and a box of matches?" said Algy.

"A letter from the Central Committee here made me cave in, I'm sorry to say," continued Barry; "and then I addressed all my energies to the reconciliation of the conflicting business interests and social interests of the members—especially the members of the Local Committee. Algy, there was a chap said the other day that nowadays the only classes in England where class distinction prevailed still were the shopkeeping classes. He was right. I mean—psha! What's the good of talking? I wonder if you know, Mott, that my mission to Barkstone was a sham? I wonder if you know of your secretary's writing a letter to that whisky swindler explaining that my mission was a fictitious one?"

He had turned round to Mott with a suddenness that was rather disconcerting—the suddenness of a cross-examining counsel; only, of course, without the professional rudeness of the lawyer. Bernard Mott was a guest at the table of Barry's father.

Just for a second may Bernard Mott have been disconcerted. He replied, with only the pause of a second:

"My dear Joyce, how can you put such a question to me?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, but still I do put the question to you," said Barry.

"Then I can reply that I know nothing of such a letter being written—I cannot believe that it ever was written," said Mott.

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"It was written, I can assure you; I saw it with my own eyes," said Barry.

"If I find out that it was not a forgery—"

"A *bordereau*," said Algy. "Where does the *petit bleu* come in?"

"If I find that the communication—" Mott tried again.

"*Communique*," said Algy, pleasantly.

"If I find that such a letter was written, I pledge myself to retire from the Council of the brotherhood," said Mott. "Can you ask anything more than that?"

"I don't even ask so much," said Barry. "I have, as I say, chucked the whole box of tools. But because I've done so, there's no reason why you should chuck it."

"True," said Algy, who seemed to be interesting himself in this little quarrel much more than there was any need. "True, because you don't happen to find the tricks of the brotherhood congenial to your way of working, that's no reason why others should be equally far from home among them."

Rosamund thought that Algy Grafton was distinctly rude, and so he was, and so he meant to be.

"That's nonsense," said she.

"Sheer nonsense," said Barry.

"Well, who says it's not?" said Algy. When he had brought his battery into action with telling effect, he was ready to admit that the wheels of his gun carriage were not tyred with india-rubber.

To the amazement of every one, it was Coralie's voice that broke the silence which followed the little laugh after Algy's question.

"I don't think it's nonsense," said she. "What I

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think is that Mr. Joyce, having been so disgracefully treated, has a right to find out all that there is to be found out in this horrid affair. I don't think it is enough for him merely to resign."

Only during the first part of her sentence was the face of Mr. Mott observed to lengthen. By the time she had finished, his face had resumed its normal proportions. The last word had hardly left her lips before he said:

"That is exactly the view I take of the matter. I feel this matter more deeply than I can express. It was I who was deputed to use my influence with Joyce to induce him to undertake that difficult and delicate mission to Barkstone, and if there has been any underhand work, it is I who have been insulted, and it is I who shall insist on a full and complete investigation."

This was very frank and even generous, most people would fancy; but Algy Grafton for one doubted Mr. Mott's sincerity; he never knew any good come to people who said "It is I" when they had a chance of saying "It is me."

"You may make any investigations you please," said Barry. "From what I saw of the organisation at Barkstone—I had never previously been in touch with the machinery of the brotherhood—I am not disposed to think that any investigation would be satisfactorily conducted. Brotherhood—a brotherhood of bickering, a brotherhood of brawling, a brotherhood of—of—"

"All the 'b's' are used up," said Algy. "It's a pity, but I'm afraid that you must sacrifice effect for the sake of truth, and say a brotherhood of tommy-rot."

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"He'll say nothing of the sort until he has found out for certain if it is a brotherhood of tommy-rot," said Coralie, stoutly.

Then Rosamund rose with a peal of laughter, and the air having once been set vibrating with that form of music every one present breathed a wave or two of it, and got into a good humour.

"Don't talk any more of that—that tommy-rot," said she. "Come along, Coralie; they are going to smoke. It's better to leave gracefully than to be smoked out, isn't it? Now don't continue talking of brotherhood and things of that sort, or you'll be sure to quarrel. When is your team to arrive, Algy?"

"Half-past three," he said.

"It's nearly three now," said she, "and we have to get on our hats."

"That can't be done conscientiously inside half an hour," he said. "A quarter of an hour for each hat."

Rosamund went into a drawing-room with Coralie, saying:

"I'm glad Barry has returned, even though he has failed in that wonderful mission of his. He should never have gone to that horrid place."

"Why shouldn't he have gone?" asked Coralie.

"Oh, he was bound to fail," replied Rosamund.

"What has that got to say to it?" asked Coralie.

"What signifies failure? What about your forlorn hopes? They should give your brother a Victoria Cross. Do they only give the Victoria Cross to the men who succeed in what they try to do?"

"The others don't come back for it—they are only mentioned in the despatches, and on a little plate of

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brass let into the church wall," said Rosamund, in a low voice and with a little shaking of the head.

"I think that your brother was treated badly," said Coralie. "But he won't mind that."

"No, he won't mind that," acquiesced Rosamund. "Anyhow, he's back, and that's something. I do hope that Joey Markham—poor little Joe! But perhaps it may come all right. These things sometimes do if good-natured people keep out of the way. But there are so many good-natured people about it's difficult keeping clear of them."

"I don't quite understand what—"

"Oh, I quite forgot. But you were greatly taken with Joey Markham, weren't you?"

"You mean Lady Joan—yes, she's lovely. But—why do you talk of her at this time—of her and good-natured people and that?"

"Well, Barry is back now, and—didn't you guess anything?"

"Guess anything? What was there to guess? Is Lady Joan a riddle?"

"She's a girl. We all think her so nice. But good-natured people so often spoil a little romance through their good nature. You see, Coralie, people who are good-natured are rarely anything else, and they are always interfering. We all like Jo."

"And I'm sure that she likes you all."

"Well, I'm not sure about all; but one of us—thank goodness! he's home again. I know that she has refused one good offer this season already."

Coralie was thoughtful—puzzled.

"Do you mean that she—and—and—your brother?" she began.

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She did not quite know how she should phrase the idea that had been so faintly outlined to her.

"You have seen it, too, then?" said Rosamund. "I know that that's the general idea that prevails. Oh, Barry and Jo used to be great chums. He taught her all she knows about fishing. I do hope that—we all hope it. Wouldn't it be nice if it came about?"

"I don't quite understand, and I'm afraid of making a mistake," said Coralie. "Do you suggest that she is in love with your brother?"

"Well, perhaps that would be going too far. I wouldn't like to say anything nasty about any girl."

"But that wouldn't be nasty—quite the opposite; I'm sure that no one could be—well, no one could be nicer than your brother. Any girl might—might care for him."

Rosamund eyed her eagerly. Coralie was looking at the carving at the back of a chair.

"So a good many girls think," said Rosamund, with a laugh. "But Barry is a trifle fastidious, you see; but fastidious and all he might have committed himself long ago, only that—well, let us hope that our poor little Jo—good gracious! I do believe that Algy's team has arrived already. We must rush and dress like anything."

But when they appeared after the lapse of ten minutes—or was it a quarter of an hour?—in all the finery which makes the top of a coach so picturesque, no one could have guessed that they had put on their hats in a hurry.

Barry, who had changed his travelling dress, cer-

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tainly never suspected it, nor did Mr. Mott, though some surprise was in the eyes of the latter. He had had an idea that Coralie was to remain in his company for the rest of the afternoon. He said a grieved good-bye to her. Major Grafton had not gone quite the length of asking him to take a seat on the outside of his coach; he had merely said:

"I won't insult you by inviting you to join us, Mr. Mott. I suppose it would be as much as your place is worth in the brotherhood for you to be seen on the box seat of a coach in the Park."

This Mr. Mott did not take to be an invitation.

He went away grieving, while the young women criticised the team of bays which Algy had picked up for a mere song a few days before. Such bays! Beautiful from the tips of their little ears, which they held at the "carry," and then at the "shoulder" as their necks were patted, down to their fetlocks, which Barry felt critically. Exquisite in the noble poise of their heads with slack-bearing reins. Polished till they shone like a mahogany table. Proud of noble lineage, but not demonstrative. Docile but self-respecting. Fearing nothing in the world except a flapping poster and the outstretched arm of a policeman in Piccadilly.

And then Barry Joyce, who knew a good deal about the driving of animals, though he had failed in his mission to Barkstone, was invited by Algy to take the reins and express his opinion regarding the *nuances* of the team. He did so without a moment's hesitation, and he never once got into trouble with them. He took them into Piccadilly at the gentlest of trots, and then up Regent Street at its busiest time, round-

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ing into Oxford Street, and threading a way in and out among the few vacant spaces between the omnibuses, and so on to the Marble Arch, through which the Park was entered.

Just as the coach reached the Prince of Wales gate a victoria passed through that entrance, and both the occupants made salutations to the coach party, and Coralie did not fail to notice the sudden touch of colour that came to the face of the younger of the two, who was Lady Joan Markham, the other lady being the Countess.

"How pretty Jo is looking," said Rosamund, turning round from the box seat where she sat with her brother to Coralie, who was behind her with Algy.

"So very pretty," said Coralie.

Rosamund had been anxious to see the expression that was on Coralie's face at that moment. She saw it and was glad.

Coralie was anxious to see what expression there was on Barry's, but he did not turn even his profile to her.

When the two girls were alone in a drawing-room waiting for their tea, an hour later, they did not talk much; and Coralie was the more silent of the two. It was after a long silence that Coralie, to the amazement of her friend, cried out, with an earnestness that had something of piteousness in it:

"I want to go away from this place, Rosamund. I want to go to Ireland—America—somewhere—anywhere. I'm tired—oh, so tired! of the dressing and undressing, and the dressing again, and the dining, and the dancing. I want to go away."

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"And you're right, too," said Rosamund, after a smiling pause. "You're quite right. I'm sick of it all, too. We start for home—for Ireland—this day week."

"No, no; to-morrow—we must start to-morrow," cried Coralie.

"To-morrow—make it so," acquiesced Rosamund. "We shall be all alone, but—"

"That's it—that's it—that's just it," said Coralie. "Alone—I want to be alone with you and Ireland, my dear, good Rosamund."

Rosamund perceived that the moment was a critical one, as far as Coralie was concerned, and she had somehow come to think of the fortunes of the Joyce family as bound up in some curious way with the fortune of Coralie. She had two pages of a diary—the seven-days-to-a-page one—crowded with engagements, but with the decisive air of a great commander she went to the drawer, took out the diary, and bringing it over to where Coralie was sitting, drew her pencil down the two pages, and said:

"There!" in a tone of triumph.

"There!" cried Coralie, throwing herself into her arms and kissing her, and then hurrying from the room with her hands over her face.

And then Rosamund pondered. It seemed to her that years had passed since she herself had been overwhelmed by the same feelings as Coralie was now experiencing, though as a matter of fact it was only a year ago that she had been so affected.

"Mother," she said, as Lady Glasnamara entered the room. "Mother, Coralie and I are going to Ireland to-morrow."

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Her mother looked at her anxiously—enquiringly—for a few moments, and then she said:

“You are the only one of the family worth talking about, but why on earth tea is not up passes knowledge.”

CHAPTER XXXIV

There is a bay—it is not a bay; it is more a fjord, but it is not a fjord; it is a lough, and the sun sinks into the Atlantic between the headlands north and south of the entrance, and the Atlantic waves crouch down like lions at the base of the mighty cliffs, and then suddenly rise up and rush roaring between the steep cliffsides for many a mile, plunging riotously into the hollow depths of many a cave, pierced by long water-wearing years through the bordering rocks, and finally gambolling like kids upon the sandy beach at that end of the lough which is most remote from the sea. The sound of the roaring and the moaning and the murmuring and the mystery of the waters of that lough fills the air from the time the sun rises over the distant dark rims of the mighty Slieve Gorm until it passes above the nine peaks of the giant range of the Croagh Dhu Mountains, and then reaches the grey green of those wandering western waves, burning its way through the diaphanous mist hanging over the waters until the purple heather of every hillside holds the glow of that glory and makes a wonder of the hour of sunset.

It was at the hour of sunset that all the wonder and the glory of the western land towards which she had been travelling all day came upon Coralie for the first time in her life. The curious car upon which she

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and Rosamund were being borne to Cashel-na-mara stopped just where the turning of the road gave her a glimpse of the sinuous Lough Omeragh, with the sun making all the mist of luminous gold, so that the outline of the orb was not to be traced between the mighty headlands at the entrance. The car stopped on the road, and the girl sent her eyes out over the waters, where the molten gold seemed to drop from the sunset, quivering as it touched the surface; she sent her eyes down the glen that cut its way through the hillslope at the roadside, and was already glowing in majestic purple; she sent her eyes all along the splendid range of hills of heather, holding the last rays from the western mystery of gold overflowing the crucible in which it was melting; she saw the ruins of the castle of the great family of the Ardagh lying in picturesque loneliness on the summit of one of the lower slopes, swathed in its ivy; she saw the holy well, with the broken Celtic cross at the foot of another of the slopes, the offerings of the devout fluttering in tatters from the sticks where they had been hung; and on the bare stones below the enclosure of the well knelt two barefoot peasant women, their woollen shawls drawn over their heads. Close at hand, where the larches of the hillside grew thickest, the round tower of Ardkill showed the cone of its summit above its ivy surplice.

Her eyes took in all the details of the scene, and her eyes overflowed with tears. She did not know why. She could not tell that she was weeping away the legacy of tears which she had inherited from a long line of Randalls, all of whom had for centuries looked daily upon the scene which had now come

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before her eyes for the first time. It was the self-same scene, unchanged through the long centuries that had brought such changes to the Randals. "The Randals, who had been the chiefs of their people, had owned mountain and forest and lough in the days before the first conquest of the land by the English. The castle of Ardagh had been their home for ages, and it had been a ruin for three hundred years. The peasant Randals had stood barefoot and in rags laboriously tilling a miserable patch of soil on the mountain-side, and every time that one of the family looked up to wipe the sweat from his brow he saw the ruined home of his people.

But only one of the race had thought shame of his condition, and begun to dream dreams of emancipation. Like others of his country, he thought that he could best work out his own emancipation by seeking first the emancipation of his country.

Denis Randal had, in Ireland, dreamt of the emancipation of Ireland for five years, and then he had fled to America, to make his millions, not by dreaming, but by hard work. And now for the first time for twenty-five years one of the Randals looked upon the changeless scene which had witnessed the changes in their house.

And yet she wondered why she found herself weeping. She did not know how for three hundred years the Randals, chieftains of the hills, and the Randals, fishermen and peasants, had wept such tears, knowing that the land was passing away from them, and that, though they might die for the land, they could not keep it. Many of them had died for it, and every day the sun had sunk, blurred with tears, into the

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Atlantic, just as it was doing when the curious car stopped at the bidding of Rosamund where the coast road was highest.

"It is Ireland—Ireland! It is our land—our dear land!" said Coralie, for her tears were not wild or passionate, and they forced no sob from her throat.

"Our dear land!" said Rosamund. "The land which casts its spell over all who come to it. Ah, my dear, cannot you feel yourself folded in the arms of this scene? Cannot you feel its arms tighten over you—the arms of our mother—our mother?"

"I feel them—I feel them," said Coralie. "I feel like the child who has strayed but still returns to nestle close to its mother. And what do they feel over there—over there?" She looked towards the dimly setting sun. "There they all are—the people who have stood here evening after evening, seeing this same scene—the people who have starved here through the long years—they still see it—I know it. I have seen my father looking eastward across that same Atlantic, and I know now that he saw that grey water—those mountains with the heather—is it pink or purple? I see now all that he saw when he stood in the silence looking eastward, and then turned away with a sigh. Ah, my dear Rosamund, what a time I have wasted in London! But now—oh, I never want to be anywhere in the world except here—here!"

"I knew it," said Rosamund. "When you came to me so suddenly on Tuesday, after our coach drive, and asked me to carry you here, I knew that you heard the voice calling to you—the voice which we all hear—the voice which calls from the headlands out there—from the caves of the Rosses across there—I

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knew that you heard the voice and must obey its summons. I have heard it myself—the mother—our dear mother Ireland calling to us.”

“If I hear that voice and fail Ireland in her hour of her need, may I fail to know happiness in this life!” cried the daughter of the Randals; and the waves of the Atlantic responded in solemn measure to her cry, as the waters of Babylon may have responded to the chant of “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!” that came from the Hebrew exiles.

And this is the burden of the song of the Irish exiles who stand on the banks of the Hudson, the Mississippi, the St. Lawrence—what are all the waters of Babylon compared with these?—while their eyes look eastward. And from the great islands of the Southern seas comes the same chant. The Irish harps are taken down from the willows, and that is the song of Zion which is sung in strange lands.

Then the sun sank, a great nebulous mass, into the sea, and the sea seemed to seethe it as it fell, and only the summits of the mountain-ridge remained luminous; the larches and firs that stretched out long and ghostly arms one to another were the first to catch the gathering gloom, and to wrap themselves round with it as with a garment. The ivy upon the broken walls of the ancient castle glimmered through the dusk, and the peak of the round tower shone above the trees of the wood grey as a rock in the midst of a dark sea. The peasant women kneeling near the Celtic cross were silently joined by the others, with a child and a grey-haired, bent old man. They all knelt there in silence. No bell rang out its Angelus for them; but the waters gave them the notes of their

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solemn litany, and they responded silently and in all humility.

At a sign from Rosamund the car drove on down to the road that branched off to the castle, no one speaking a word. Larry Kelly, the driver, had a reputation of being the most garrulous boy in the province of Connaught, and during the first eight miles of his driving he had shown himself to be worthy of his fame; but not a word did he speak from the moment he stopped the horses at the foot of the range of hills until he reached the castle drive, and then it was only to thank heaven that he had still a trot—"throt" he pronounced it—left for the avenue. Perhaps Larry may have appreciated the situation of the moment more accurately than strangers would have given him credit for doing. Fortunately, he had not to submit to the judgment of strangers, and his silence at the right time was as highly appreciated by the girls as was his loquacity at other times.

The castle of the Joyces was not an ancient structure. Until Cromwell's army had come to Ireland there had not been a Joyce in the island. Nothing under the age of a thousand years is considered venerable in Ireland; still an ostentatious sequence of repairs is not considered intolerable, so that Cashel-na-mara, being built on the foundation of a stronghold of the De Bourgos, and kept habitable from year to year, had its claims to consideration admitted by the peasantry throughout the province.

It stood on the side of the hill that bordered the lough, in the midst of a plantation of firs which grew so thickly for some miles around it. At the bottom of the slope there lay a black tarn, half a mile broad

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at one part and a mile long, and beyond this piece of water the majestic billowy heights of Slieve Gorm stretched away in mighty masses of heather, until the range turned southward, and disclosed, at a distance of eight or nine miles, the broad bay of the Ards, with its hundred islands, and every island with its mist of legends.

But when, at the termination of that trot, jealously hoarded up for the avenue by Larry Kelly and as freely expended at the right moment, the car pulled up at the porch of the castle, a few stars were shining over the black range of the mountains, and Coralie could only make out the dwindling grey of the bay of the Ards. The moment that she passed into the black oak of the great square hall, which only a few silver sconces illuminated, she became aware of the sound of a strange melody coming from a distance, murmurous at first and with something of weirdness in its tone, but gradually strengthening until it rang around the carved rafters in an air of triumph.

She stood looking vaguely up at the enormous antlers of one of the ancient Irish elks on the wall, and listening to the strange melody. Not until a considerable time had passed and the music had dwindled away with the cadences of a silver-falling stream, did she learn that it came from the harp of one Cormac MacCormac, the bard of the family, and the greatest—some said the only—living exponent of the Irish harp. He was playing the usual welcome with which he received the members of the family on their autumnal return from their exile to the adjacent island of Great Britain.

No sooner had the harp music faded away among

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the rafters of the roof than there stole through the hall a still more curiously plaintive melody. It was inexpressibly sweet and of unvarying softness, with now and again a prolonged note that sounded like a wail.

Coralie stood entranced at the entrance to the hall. The dim light, with here and there a glimmering reflection from the polished surface of the black panelling, the faint odour of a turf fire smouldering on the immense hearth, all added to the enchantment of the *mise en scène*, and appealed, without the intrusion of a false note, to the girl's imagination. And that strange music, such as she had never heard in all her life previously, sent its soft wail around her, making her think of the stories she had heard of the banshee, until she felt that she was breathing the atmosphere of fairy lore and mystic legend—the atmosphere of the land of mystery—the grey island that has been a mystery for centuries and that to-day is less understood than it was five hundred years ago.

When the strain of music had died away she heard Rosamund speaking some phrases in a language which she knew was Irish, and from the distance of the hall came the sound of a reply from two voices.

"*Cead mille failthe!*" they cried in unison, and Coralie knew that this was the hundred thousand welcomes of her Irish kinsmen—the greeting of the people to all strangers.

She felt that she had misspent her time for years, or why should she be unable to reply in their own tongue—in her own tongue—to the Irish greeting offered to her by Cormac MacCormac, the ancient

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harper, and Constantine O'Carolan, the player of the Irish bagpipes which had so enchanted her.

And then the ceremony of the cruiskeen, with the cries of "*Slainthe!*" from all parts of the hall, was gone through. The hereditary Ardgilly, or steward of the castle, brought forward a great silver goblet, and bowing to both girls with a cry of "*Slainthe!*" which was echoed from wall to wall, drank a draught of the contents, and then wiping the rim of the silver, handed it to Rosamund, who, repeating the cry, touched the edge with her lips, and offered it to Coralie, who did likewise, returning the cup to the only member of the Joyce family who was beneath the roof. Rosamund then offered the cup to the old harper, who more liberally interpreted his duty than the girls had done, passing on the drink to his brother bard, who quickly drained the vessel, proving that he had done so by reversing it on the tray of the steward.

This was the end of the ceremony of welcome; the subsequent proceedings were devoid of any symmetry. There were inquiries after her ladyship, Lord love her! after the master, God bless him! after Master Barry, the saints guard him! And was it the good truth that Master Bertie—may the heavens be his bed!—was coming to Cashel-na-mara? And when might the boy be expected? And the birds were perishing alive at the thought that nobody at all, at all was coming to shoot them; and the salmon were getting fewer and fewer every year; but this year it's plenty of them there would be for all comers; and Andy, the Shaughran, had killed two otters, and it was no less than five seals that had been seen off Ross-na-Murchan; and if the lady from England—

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they did not know that Coralie was one of themselves, only coming from America—would like a seal hunt in the caves, sure she could have it without delay.

And then there came a curious sound—the pattering of many feet on the oaken boards of a long corridor that ran behind the hall—and in another moment there burst headlong through the great door a number of dogs—sporting dogs, wiry terriers, fox-terriers, and nondescripts, falling over one another in their eagerness to overwhelm the girls with their greetings.* Fawning and whining joyously—wagging tails and shaking ears, barking in staccato, and behaving for a minute with all the gladness of insubordination, before the crack of a whip at the door brought them to their senses.

And all this before the girls had taken off their hats.

—“This is Ireland at last!” cried Rosamund, when a message arrived from the kitchen, and she ran from the hall with Coralie behind her.

“It’s home at last,” cried Coralie.

But her maid, who knew nothing about what the name of Ireland meant, was chillingly silent.

CHAPTER XXXV

Coralie could not sleep that night, though she had had a drive of fourteen miles (Irish) upon a, "jaunting car" (Irish) in an atmosphere impregnated with the ozone that was blown inland from four thousand miles of ocean. There was, she thought, no earthly reason why she should not go to sleep; and she was right, for the reason of her wakefulness was not earthly. How could she know that the ghosts of thirty generations of Randals had gathered together under the roof of Cashel-na-mara to welcome the daughter of their race back to the land of the Randals?

How could she know that the origin of that strange nervousness that came to her the moment that she had put out her candle—how could she guess that it was due to the sudden arrival of the great Shane MacShane MacGilly O'Gilly Randal, Chieftain of the Rosses, Prince of Glen Dhu and Slieve Gorm? He had been a masterful man in the flesh, this special ancestor of hers, and assuredly he was a masterful man in the spirit. He had laid his hand upon her shoulder, and had looked into her face with that disconcerting stare of his, the moment the room was in darkness. She could not see his disconcerting stare, but she felt it, and that made her nervous.

And then the still more masterful Owen Mohr Randal, who had earned his title of Mac-na-mara, or

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Son of the Waves, by his prowess in overcoming the galleys of the Danish invaders. He came trampling down the corridor, only being a ghost his footsteps could not be heard, and he carried over his shoulder his famous battle-axe, with which he had cleft in twain the armoured heads of his adversaries, only being the ghost of the battle-axe it made no noise when it knocked against the beams. Only, noiseless and unseen, it was as disconcerting to the girl as the invisible stare of Shane, Prince of Glen Dhu.

Oh, the air soon became as densely charged with ghostly chieftains as a cloud is charged with electricity, and Coralie was affected by these atmospheric conditions, just as some people are affected when there is thunder in the air. The room became crowded with spirits, all of whom had something to say to the girl, just as the ghosts of certain people had something to say to Richard III. on the night before the battle of Bosworth Field.

Coralie became as uneasy as that king was, owing to these supernatural visitants. She was, one may say, the new baby in the family, and all her parents were interested in her, and they discussed her and her future with that hushed volubility of parents in the presence of The Child. Their volubility was great, but it was hushed to a point of terrible silence that kept the girl awake just as effectively as the hushed voice of the hospital nurses chatting about their young men banishes sleep from the room in which their victim is lying.

Once or twice she fancied that she saw a curious spectral glimmer through the darkness, and she wondered if that could be due to the fair hair of Randal

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Barr, the young chieftain who had made himself unpopular in the family by reason of his well-meant attempts to introduce a scheme of arbitration instead of a fight with battle-axes in cases of disagreement. Or was it due to the paleness of the face of his grandfather, poor old Denis Randal, who, after trying to keep his nine sons and their mother alive on the product of half an acre of a potato-patch, died of starvation after he had buried his wife and eight of their children during the awful famine of '48?

Poor old Denis, the peasant, was as true a Randal as the great Prince of Slieve Dhu, or as the adventurous Hugh Oge Randal, who had been foremost in the charge of the Irish Brigade at Fontenoy—foremost in the charge and first to be slain. It is the spirit of the man that counts for everything in the spirit world, and the ghosts of the old Randals who were chiefs and princes met on perfectly equal terms their descendants with the spade. Only one of the race was universally regarded by his brethren as worthy of a supreme position, and that one was not the great Shane MacShane, who had captured the castle of the Tuatta, nor was he Owen Mohr Mac-na-mara, the conqueror of the Danes at sea; nor Rory Randal Dearg, who had held out in his stronghold for eighteen weeks when besieged by the terrible Fergus O'Neal—no, that one who was acknowledged to be the supreme head of this race of heroes was Denis Randal, the Irish peasant, who had died like a dog in a ditch after feeding his only remaining child with an egg which a rat had let fall. The child had had some food daily, his father had not tasted food for nine days.



She looked out over the black firs.

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They all gathered round the bed of the child, and when old Denis stooped over her and kissed her on the cheek, perceiving in her face a likeness to that sole remaining child of his whose life he had saved at the sacrifice of his own, Coralie fancied that she had just awakened from a dream in which she had been kissed by her father.

She rose from her bed and found her way to a window, which she opened. She looked out over the black firs to where the long range of Slieve Gorm dwindled into the east beneath a million stars. The night would have been oppressively silent but for the whisper of the ocean that came fitfully through the air. The distant whisper of moving waters mingled with the hollow roar, faintly heard as a whisper in a deeper key, of the waters that forced their way through the headlands and then all through the sheer length of the lough, with here and there in its organ music nursing the sob that came from one of the nearer caves of the Rosses.

Once again Coralie felt that she had come to the mysterious land of her many dreams. Her father had talked to her since she was a child of Ireland, and Ireland meant no more to him than this glen and that lough whose sobbing she heard through the night. He had never been elsewhere in Ireland until he set out for the port from which he had gone to America. But he possessed as little power as the greatest artist in words to describe a scene so as to bring it before the eyes of other people. He had talked to her of mountains, but she had never seen those mountains as she now saw the range of Slieve Gorm, black beneath the stars. He had talked of the glen, of the lough,

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of the sharp peninsulas known as the Rosses, but she had seen none of them during his descriptions.

The Ireland that existed in her imagination was the land of a dream—full of mystery and dimness and starlight, and the sound of waters; and she felt that it was to this Ireland she had come—it was upon this Ireland she was now looking out. Her heart became full of it; and she stood at the open window until the mysterious birds of night, which had swooped past her at intervals, had ceased to make themselves apparent in the faint dawn-light. She saw the glints of white light upon the distant surfaces of the Bay of the Ards, and the eastward peaks of the mountains saw the light and were glad. She heard the dogs howl in the kennels far down among the black firs, and she remembered that dogs became aware of the presence of ghosts; though she did not know that it was the passing of the spirits which had crowded her room and kept her awake that was causing the commotion in the kennels.

The spirits of the Randals had paid their visit to the bedside of the child of the race and had left her their blessing. She went back to bed and slept for six hours.

When she went downstairs to her breakfast of such salmon as she had never tasted in her life, she found beside her plate a letter from Bernard Mott. She did not tear it out of its cover with the ardour of a girl who loves; the sight of his handwriting somehow seemed incongruous—it was out of sympathy with her thoughts; somehow she had not been thinking of Bernard Mott since she had come to Ireland; he had been lost somewhere in that Irish Channel at the bot-

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tom of which Lady Glasnamara had once wished him to be.

Rosamund did not fail to notice the little contraction of her brows as she put the letter into her pocket, and began to speak of the curiously restless night she had spent, and also of that tranquillising space during which she had stood at the open window listening to the first whisper of the dawn.

"That is what we have been waiting for all these long years—the dawn of a new day to Ireland," said Rosamund. "But it seems as far off as ever. And you saw it coming—you, Coralie Randal. Well, let us hope that it is a good omen."

"I came across the Atlantic to see Ireland—only to see and to know Ireland," said Coralie. "You know that I did not want to go to London. All the time that I have been there seems wasted."

"What?" cried Rosamund. "Wasted?"

"Wasted!" cried Coralie, with emphasis.

"And yet you met Mr. Mott in London; you would have had no chance of meeting him in Ireland."

Coralie gave a laugh and then became silent. Some moments had passed before she said, quite ignoring Rosamund's remark:

"I shall do something for Ireland before I die."

Rosamund shook her head sadly.

"How many times have I heard people say those words," she said. "People want to do so much for Ireland, but they do not know how to begin. Oh, the money that has been thrown away by people who did not know Ireland and who had no real sympathy for the Irish! We have done something—the Joyces have done something. Years ago the Joyces were

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rich; now they are poor. They have done that for Ireland. I go penniless to the man who is to be my husband; but the money which would have been mine was well spent. And my brother—oh, Barry is content with very little money of his own because he loves Ireland. All his complaint is that he has no money to spend among the people here. I know that he has schemes—splendid schemes to help the people; there is the fishing, the building of curing-houses—all that—and a wharf to accommodate a steamer. Ah, perhaps it will all come some day. Our dear Joey Markham—who knows? Barry has his schemes and I have my dreams. Will this part of the country owe its prosperity—its regeneration—to Joan Markham?"

Rosamund was glad to see the light of jealousy that sparkled in the girl's eyes as she heard her artfully made suggestion. She perceived without great trouble that the thought of the Randal country owing its prosperity to Lady Joan Markham—an English girl whose name appeared daily in the society column of a newspaper, among other frivolous society beauties—was unendurable to the daughter of the Randals.

"Ah, yes; I think if it rested with poor little Jo all would be well," she continued. "But Barry—well, why should he not come to love her?"

"If he does not come to love her he will never marry that girl," said Coralie Randal, resolutely.

"If he loves Ireland that will be enough. If a man really loves his country, he will—he will—marry any one for its sake," said Rosamund.

"He will never do that," cried Coralie.

"How do you know?"

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"He told me so."

"Oh!"

"Yes—at least he said—well, I asked him if I should promise to marry Bernard Mott."

"Ah!"

"Yes; and he said—I cannot tell you just what he said; but he will never marry any one whom he does not love."

"Then let us both pray that, for the sake of Ireland, he will love Lady Joan Markham. And now if you want to read your letter, I'll give you ten minutes for that purpose before we make our first tour of the estate—oh, it's an estate one may be proud of, though we never get a penny out of it. It is a magnificent heritage to such as can afford to maintain it all for the fun of the thing."

"All for the fun of the thing."

With that curious phrase still sounding in her ears, Coralie went upstairs to her own room to put on her hat, and—at the suggestion of Rosamund—a cloak that was moisture-proof. There were Atlantic mists, Rosamund explained.

"All for the fun of the thing."

She wondered what Bernard Mott, whose letter she held in her hand, would say to such a phrase. Such an impulse to action would be unintelligible to him. She had no doubt that the letter which she was at the point of opening would prove this to her in the first page.

And yet she did not open the letter when she reached her room. She did not even take up her hat, or the serviceable cloak which her maid had left at hand for her. She went straight to the window at

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which she had stood watching the first suggestions of dawn, and once more sent her eyes over the landscape.

The thought that was burning in her heart was a somewhat curious one. It was close akin to the thought that burned in the heart of the first Randal who had been driven out of his rightful inheritance. She felt that she had suddenly been dispossessed of this fair land. It had passed out of her hands into the hands of a stranger—into the hands of Lady Joan Markham. On looking out in the earliest dawn she had felt that the land 'was hers; and this glad feeling had been strengthened before she had gone down to breakfast; but now she felt that the land had been torn from her by Lady Joan Markham.

Jealousy burned within her breast—jealousy of Lady Joan Markham, who would doubtless do her best to gain the love of Barry Joyce in order that she might enjoy the privilege of bringing prosperity to Ireland. She felt very bitter against Joan. What right had Joan to look forward to the regeneration of Ireland through the medium of her money? That was the excuse for the conquest of the country which had been advanced by the earliest invaders; they had at heart the best interests of Ireland. They hoped that a long period of prosperity would follow their conquest of the country. That was just what was in the mind of Joan Markham, she was sure; she hoped that prosperity to this part of Ireland would follow her conquest of Barry. She, 'Coralie, daughter of a long line of Randals, was to have' neither part nor lot in the scheme for the improvement of the country.

Ireland had been subjected to three invasions, she knew, on the part of the English. There was Strong-

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bow's invasion, there was the invasion of Ulster, and after that the invasion by Cromwell. These crimes went by the name of "settlements," and now here was a fourth impending—Joan Markham's invasion.

She felt the bitterness which was in the heart of young Eoghan (pronounced Owen) Randal when, on his return from a war which he had set on foot the previous year against a neighbouring chief, Donail Dearg, he learned that he had been dispossessed of his property and his castle by a nominee of the great Geraldine.

Eoghan, her ancestor, had, upon that memorable occasion, been so angry at this new settlement that he found it necessary to make his quarrel a national one, and to send the hands and feet of the Geraldine's protégé to the great Earl himself.

But what could his descendant do in view of the impending resettlement under Lady Joan Markham?

Well, she tore open the letter which she had received in Bernard Mott's handwriting; but before she had read a dozen lines of the many which it contained, she heard the voice of Rosamund calling up the stairs.

"Your ten minutes are up—your ten minutes are up!"

She threw the letter in a drawer and hurried down to the hall, where Rosamund stood, with not more than eight of the dogs about her.

Had Rosamund guessed how Coralie's heart had been burning with jealousy, she would have been well satisfied.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Still, it was a very admirable letter; and it gave evidence on every page of being the work of a man who took a very exalted view of the duties of a writer of letters. Coralie felt conscience-stricken on reading it through after lunch. She perceived that Mr. Mott had taken a great deal of trouble over it; he had even gone the length of scraping out with the point of a penknife a word here and there that did not please him, substituting the right word—a little blurred—for every one that he had erased.

She felt conscience-stricken at the reflection that so excellent a literary work should have lain neglected by her to whom it was dedicated until she had had her walk and afterwards her luncheon.

Now, however, she read it through, every word; she even held the paper up to the light in an honest endeavour to obtain a clue to the words that had been scraped out. She acknowledged that it was an excellent piece of literary work and regarded it as such—she felt that the writer meant her to regard it as such. She had once seen an ecstatic girl cover with kisses an idiotic, illiterate scrawl which she had received from her lover. Coralie felt no disposition to press to her lips the three sheets inscribed by Bernard Mott. One does not press a literary work to one's lips, however admirably it may be composed.

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But she acknowledged that it was admirable, and then sat down with her hands in her lap, thinking over all that she had seen and heard during the previous four hours.

She had spent this space of time with Rosamund among the cottages that went by the name of Duncarrig. The village was spread over a considerable tract of ground on the hillside, just at the termination of the lough. She had heard the story of the fishing of the previous four months—the story of how the new gear worked, the story of how the captain of the steamer had tried to cheat the fishermen, the story of the latest births in the village (with illustrations), the story of the widow O'Halloran's cow, the story of how Larry O'Lannigan was accused of stealing the pig that he had found straying in the bog (and wasn't it a poor case that a decent man should be treated as a criminal for saving the craythur from a speedy death in a bog-hole?), the story of Con Dougherty, the clever boy who had worked his poteen still among the heather of Slieve Dhu, and only came to grief when the new county inspector of constabulary was appointed without being previously made acquainted with Master Con's mannerisms—all those stories Coralie heard when she went to the village with Rosamund, and with almost every story the name of Barry was connected.

It was Barry who had crossed from England twice within the previous three months, although Rosamund herself had heard nothing whatsoever of the matter, to smooth away certain differences that had arisen between the captain of the steamer and the fishermen; differences that threatened to neutralise all that he,

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Barry, had done in previous years to foster the fishing industry. It was Barry who had paid for every time the steamer entered the lough; it was Barry who had started with his own hands—and money—the net-weaving industry in the village, thereby giving employment to over a score of the girls. It was Barry who actually sold the nets woven in Duncarrig to the managers of the fishing fleet at Rathbrack, who had pronounced the work excellent and had asked for more. It was Barry—Lord love him!—who was worrying the life out of the Lord Lieutenant to get a substantial grant for a fish-curing factory, and it was Barry who had tried to prove to his Excellency that his reason for withholding the grant on the ground that the villagers were not at the point of starvation, and that, moreover, it was not fortunate enough to be situated in a congested district, was ridiculous. It was also Master Barry who had come across the Channel solely to prevent Larry O'Lannigan from being convicted of stealing the pig (which he had stolen).

Rosamund made light of all that Barry had done—most of it had been revealed to her in detail for the first time during this visit to the village; and in talking to Coralie she expressed no surprise at anything that she had heard. She assumed that it was quite natural for a young man who rode in pony-races and played polo and a little cricket, and who was, moreover, interested in the development of modern socialism, to do all that he had been doing without saying anything about it to any one who was not directly concerned in the matter.

But Coralie was once more amazed, and her

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amazement was quite as great as that which she had experienced on reading the account of the silence of Algy Grafton in regard to that little affair about which every one in London had been talking a month before. She felt greatly impressed by all that was revealed to her among the cottages. She had once before felt that there were phases of character existing on the English side—more properly the Irish side of the Atlantic; the Atlantic is more Ireland's than England's—of which she had not been aware so long as she remained in England.

She felt as greatly irritated at this revelation as she had been at the other one vouchsafed to her. Revelations are as a rule irritating; but Coralie was essentially just, and she made no attempt to lure herself into the belief that, after all, there was nothing particular in the phases of character which had been revealed to her. She knew that there was a great deal in them, and that was probably why she felt irritated. She could not but admit to herself that she had been too hasty in her judgment of some of the people with whom she had come in contact in England. She had been shocked by their lack of sincerity—as it appeared to her—in everything that mattered in life, in the great business of living. They did not seem to live in accordance with any recognised system of philosophy; she had therefore been shocked; for much learning at American schools had induced her to believe that people who try to amble along in life without the guidance of a recognised scheme of philosophy are as little to be trusted as those who profess no form of religion.

To be sure she had witnessed a good deal of in and

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out running among the philosophies on the part of public men in America; but then, she had heard of cases of men in America shooting at others who had, in an access of opprobrium, alluded to them as politicians. One does not look to Tammany Hall when one seeks an illustration of the higher philosophy of government; but she thought that she had a right to look to the Mother of Parliaments for the perfection of a self-respecting system.

Well, the result of her investigations was a profound disappointment. The greatest ministers of state had talked like schoolboys, and the voting upon the great questions was on the automatic machine principle.

The Government Whip, when there was a Division, piled together his leaden discs, and as each passed into that portion of the machine known as the Lobby, the wheels began to work. The Opposition Whip did exactly the same thing with his machinery. The whole thing was automatic, and yet people talked about the result as if it were something to be proud of. Those were the people who did not know anything about it; but she knew. She had talked with Cabinet Ministers, and it was for her amusement that an Irish debate had been set in motion—another phase of automatic action.

All this she had seen with her eyes or heard with her ears, and she fancied that she had mastered the whole system of government by Parliament, and had found out that it was not a system, but only a systematic want of system.

And then came Bernard Mott.

Bernard Mott seemed to her the only public man

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who was capable of formulating his aims. And his aims, as formulated by himself, were the most exalted that a man could have. Some people had laughed at him, others had called him a crank; but she had not minded. She knew that the crank is one of the most important portions of any fabric of locomotion—the locomotion by which a state takes the first place in the world; he was, she knew, the only one worth considering.

Two months ago she had known all this; but now—well, now she knew something more; and she had less confidence than before in the finality of her knowledge of people.

Without losing confidence in Bernard Mott, she could not help feeling that she had been wrong in fancying that he only of all men whom she had met was sincere in his aims—that he, and he only, cared a jot for the advancement of his fellow-men. There was Algy Grafton, for instance; he had cared so much for his fellow-men that he had stood alone facing the bullets and the spears of the dervishes in order to save the lives of a few soldiers. And here was Barry Joyce—but Barry Joyce had always shown himself to be seriously disposed, though he did talk rather more about polo and its exponents and pony-racing on the flat than about any other subject.

Ah, if she had only known that he felt so strongly as she now knew he did in regard to his duty to Ireland, what—what—what talks they might have had together! That was her one thought now as she sat at her window watching the sapphires and rubies of the heather glowing on the mountain-slope before her eyes.

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But would he have talked with her about what he had done for his portion—*her* portion of Ireland? She had her doubts. She knew that he had a contempt for the men whom he styled "professional Irishmen"—those Parliamentary pretenders who had never done anything for Ireland but talk. While they had been talking he had been working on behalf of Ireland, and even his own sister had known nothing of what he had done for his country.

And then Coralie became impatient at the reticence of Barry Joyce, and once again jealousy burned in her heart when she thought of the coming of Lady Joan Markham with her money to continue the splendid work of teaching the people to work, which Barry had begun.

She paced the room—pacing a room is the last resource of the woman who is desperately jealous of another woman—as her thoughts came upon her, the thoughts of her own unimportance as a factor in the working out of the Irish problem, the thought that she was not wanted here, that they could get on well enough without her.

Then suddenly she remembered that Bernard Mott had once told her that it was the scheme of the Joyce family to improve their position by inducing her to marry the eldest son of the house. His telling her that had aroused her indignation against the Joyce family for some hours; it only took a few hours to assure her that Bernard had been mistaken in this idea of his.

But what if he had not been mistaken? What if Barry had told her of all he had accomplished in Ireland, and asked her to—

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That thought left her standing in the middle of the room. If it had been a solid wall that she had run against, her stoppage would not have been more abrupt. She felt the blood rush to her face with the impulse of that sudden, terrible thought of hers. She put her hands before her face in an endeavour to shut out that thought with which she was confronted. She rushed to the table on which Bernard Mott's letter was lying, and snatching up his manuscript, read it through once more.

She had found the formula for the banishment of that thought-fiend which had taken possession of her—that fiend whose name was Unfaith. The letter was undoubtedly a powerful one. It suggested to her the splendid mission which it was still in her power to accomplish.

"Side by side, hand in hand, you and I, Coralie, shall march onward to our goal for the healing of the nations," one paragraph ran. There was plenty of the same style of writing in other parts of the letter, and reading them was good for her. She felt that she would be faithful to the mission which she had accepted by the side of Bernard Mott. She had given him her promise.

When a girl feels she is bound to a man simply because of a promise she is in a perilous state. Perhaps Barry was aware of this fact when he gave Coralie the advice to give her promise only to a man whom she loved. Perhaps he knew that love is the real binding power, and that the promise is, for binding purposes, a rope of sand.

Perhaps he knew nothing whatsoever of these details, but only felt he loved the girl too well to give

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her any advice except what he knew would, if followed, bring her happiness.

At any rate, she read her letter, wherein her future was so admirably sketched out for her. She would march onward side by side with Bernard Mott to that goal which meant healing to the nations. If healing was to come to the nations generally, why should Ireland only be excluded from the balm conveyed by that message? Ireland stood in greater need of healing than most nations, and why should it be excluded?

It was somewhat ridiculous that she should find herself incapable of thinking about Ireland generally, and that her thoughts should be confined to that area of the island over which the sound of the organ voice of Lough Omeragh was heard. But it actually seemed to her that there was no part of the island worth working for but only this.

After all, it was not ridiculous. The Randals' Ireland had never extended beyond this area, and she had no ideas on the subject of Ireland beyond those that she had inherited from the Randals. They had left her that love which had been theirs, if they had left her nothing else.

But she would keep her promise to Bernard Mott.

She knew that she would keep her promise to him after she had convinced herself of this fact by writing a long letter to him. And this long letter was devoted to an account of all that Barry Joyce had done for Ireland—silently, devotedly, at great self-sacrifice lasting through several years. Every line of the letter was a tribute to Barry's capacity, to Barry's thoughtfulness, to Barry's thorough love for the peo-

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ple and understanding of the people. When she had read over what she had written she felt greatly pleased, and that was how she came to be certain that she would keep the promise which she had made to Bernard Mott.

CHAPTER XXXVII

It was three days after she had written her first letter to Bernard Mott from Cashel-na-mara that she sat down to write another to him. And her second letter was more important than the first, though she feared that it would not form such pleasant reading for her *fiancé*, the fact being that it did not dwell upon the ability of his friend Barry Joyce, as manifested in his reconstruction of the village and the development of the fisheries, but upon the dreadful possibility of her father's withholding his consent from her engagement to marry Bernard Mott.

For the previous three days she had been thinking over this question—the question of her father's giving his consent to her engagement; and she foresaw the possibility at which she had hinted to Lord and Lady Glasnamara on the morning when she confided in them. Yes, it was not at all unlikely that her father would be indignant with Bernard Mott for his presumption—that was the word which was certain to force its way into any discussion of the question—in expecting that his engagement to her would meet with the approval of her father.

When she had foreseen this attitude on the part of her father on the morning of her confidential chat with Lord and Lady Glasnamara, she had felt very stubborn. She loved her father very dearly; but in

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this particular matter she saw that it would be her duty to face him boldly and to tell him that let the consequences be what they might she would marry Bernard Mott. Her father might turn her out of his house—he might even go farther, and keep her in his house upon a diet of bread and water, still she would not yield to his command to cancel her engagement to Mr. Mott.

But during the three days spent in Ireland she was led to perceive that, after all, it might be that her duty to her father should be her first consideration. Authorities on the subject were by no means unanimous in thinking that a girl—especially a girl having the responsibility that the inheritance of a large fortune entails—should marry a man without the consent of her father.

The authorities whom she consulted on this question were writers of novels and plays, and these authorities did not speak authoritatively. But so far as her recollection served her, the most distinguished of them had shown that they were decidedly of the opinion that even if a girl were the daughter of a very foolish father, she usually came to a bad end if she married contrary to her father's wish. Of course, few writers went so far as to say that a girl should marry the first man whom her father chooses for her—that she knew to be a very different matter; but speaking generally, they induced the belief that a father should have some voice in determining whether or not a certain man shall have the privilege of spending the money which the father has earned by the sweat of his brow, or the sweat of his brain—or for that matter, by the sweating of his employes.

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She thought it right to inform Bernard of the modification undergone by her views on this rather important question, and somehow she felt more at ease when she had done so. Of course, she would not relinquish the hope of one day marrying Bernard Mott; but she thought that she would be guilty of a serious lapse from the duty which she owed to her father were she to marry any one of whom her father, who was dearer to her than all the world beside, disapproved.

The next day she got a letter from her father, expressing the joy that was his in hearing that she loved a man well enough to promise to marry him, and giving his hearty assent to her engagement. He hoped that Bernard would be able to pay him a visit in the States during the fall, while she, Coralie, was in Ireland, in order that he might have an opportunity of knowing him as a son-in-law should be known.

She read no more of the letter. It dropped from her hand. Why should that phrase, "the last plank to which I clung," whiz through her mind?

She saw her face reflected in the looking-glass. It was deathly pale. She felt as if she was to be married to Bernard Mott the next day. The harp music of the ancient Cormac MacCormac floated up to her from the hall, and the lovely music of "The Coolin" took the form of "The Voice that Breathed o'er Eden."

In a short time she became aware of the reason for her being so overcome. She perceived that the news—the good news—had come upon her too suddenly. She had trusted almost implicitly in her father's opposition to her engagement, and so she scarcely allowed herself to think of what seemed a

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remote contingency—namely, her marriage with Bernard Mott. And then suddenly—too suddenly—that letter had come that placed herself by the side of Bernard Mott at the altar-rail, so to speak. It was no wonder that she had turned pale—pale as a bride. It was no wonder that the harp in the air had wafted to her the strain of the wedding hymn. And as for that phrase about the plank—well, it was a foolish phrase, having no actual appropriateness in it to the incident of the moment. She thought it better to think no more of that phrase, but to put on a joyful face and tell Rosamund the joyful news.

And Rosamund, hearing how slow were the steps of Coralie on the oak staircase, marvelled much at the smile which was on her face as she said, on entering the dining-hall:

"I have just read my father's letter, and he gives his consent."

"Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet that come with glad tidings, but they are sometimes leisurely in their movements," said Rosamund, adding, as a puzzled look came to the girl's face instead of the smile—the smile showed no tendency to hang about her face—"I kiss you, my Coralie, and offer my congratulations on—on your smile."

"On—my—my smile?" said Coralie.

"On your smile, my dear, which is, I think, the first of a number of smiles, not because there are no impediments in the course of your true love, but because my brother Bertie will be here in two more days, and like Aurora of the lyric poets, he carries smiles in his train—yes, and brings them to us on the car."

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And she was right. Before Coralie had come to the end of the series of introspections—the series of dioramic pictures which unrolled themselves before her when she began to think of Bernard Mott and his aspirations on the one hand, and Lady Joan Markham and her hopes on the other—Bertie Joyce, midshipman, just paid off H. M. S. Cockroach, arrived at the Castle, and there was no more introspection for her, or, for that matter, any one else—only no one there except herself had made introspection a cult.

He was a boy of sixteen, not tall for his age, but as lithe as a cat and as lively as a centipede in action. He had no more hair on his head than an infant of a week old, and he kept a sharp lookout lest he might have any on his upper lip. He had his theories regarding the wearing of a moustache or beard by naval men—Lord Charles Beresford was his ideal—and every morning he looked anxiously in the glass to make sure that an insidious moustache had not sprung up during the unguarded hours of the night.

He drove the post car up the avenue from his seat on the top of his sea-chest, the legitimate driver holding on with quite audible protests on the other side. When the porch was reached he pulled up so artfully that the sea-chest, a uniform-case, and a tin cap-box were shot off the car, and he himself among them, at the feet of Rosamund and Coralie, who were awaiting his arrival. He picked himself up in a moment, and flung himself upon his sister, kissing her without restraint; he had shaken hands with the butler, and had shouted out greetings in the Irish tongue to several of the "hands" who had appeared at the sound of the chariot-wheels, from the stables, the moor, the

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lough—others were hurrying up from the village—underkeepers from the salmon river, deputy underkeepers from the mountain, and all those nondescripts who are to be found on an Irish estate—ancient men who were “on the strength” through the tradition of their having once trapped otters; others who had a reputation for having a unique knowledge of how to capture the seals that were to be found by those who knew where to look for them round the coast.

All came up with shouts in Irish—weird welcomes that rang through the still air of the August evening among the black firs. And in the centre of all the horse stood, with lowered head, panting, and with the steam rising from his back, while a dozen suggestions were made by the idlers as to his grooming and diet.

Bertie was very shy with Coralie at first, but before he had partaken of the refreshment of tea in the company of the girls he had felt her arms critically from her elbows to her shoulders, and had pronounced her muscles a bit soft, but by no means as bad as he had expected them to be. But how could she hope to be anything but “off” when she admitted not having been in a boat since her arrival?

He had taken the utmost precautions to avert the possibility of so great a misfortune happening to himself. He had ordered a boat for half-past eight, and he promised Coralie a treat. There was a fine tops’l breeze blowing from N.N.W.—oh, yes, he had ordered that, too.

Rosamund protested.

“You may go alone,” she said. “What if you choose to place yourself on a level with the bus conductor who spends his holidays driving on other men’s

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buses, must we therefore be equally idiotic? Go away with your boat."

She might as well have made the attempt to withstand the blandishments of a westerly wind. He got round her by the most judicious flatteries and wheedlings until she promised at least to go aboard the boat, and she kept her promise. There was still some daylight left when they got down to the little natural dock where the yacht Daireen was berthed, and for over two hours, until the stars were out and the great cliffs on each side of the lough were but vaguely seen, Bertie steered them through the mysteries of the waters that scarcely moved under the impulse of the quiet Atlantic.

All the old spirit of her ancestor who had won for himself the name of Mac-na-mara by overcoming the Danish galleys came upon Coralie, and under the instruction of Bertie, she "took her trick" at the tiller for half an hour, and learned to sail the boat through the fishing fleet that lay at the mouth of the lough.

When at last Bertie relieved her, and with great caution brought the boat back to her dock, where the lantern was shining, she felt actually elated by his praise. She did not know that he wanted her to enter into a plot with him for rising at five in the morning to whip the Glen Dhu River for trout for breakfast. But Rosamund knew that such a plot was in course of development when she saw her brother and Coralie whispering together in the darkest corner of the hall, while a hot drink, for which he had given the recipe to the butler, was being prepared, and the sandwiches to satisfy the Atlantic appetites of the cruisers—the phrase was Bertie's—were being cut.

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Rosamund allowed the plot to be hatched without protest, and she had the satisfaction of seeing the pair of plotters returning from their expedition just as she got out of her bed next morning. Coralie's hat had suffered somewhat from an accidental immersion in the stream, and still more from the schemes of recovery instituted by Bertie. But what did that matter? Her cheeks were rosy and her hair charmingly untidy. She was in high spirits, and she and Bertie exchanged confidences over the bodies of the trout—fourteen of them all told, and some over the half-pound—during breakfast.

He frankly confessed to Rosamund later in the day that Coralie was a rippin' girl, and he passed her as the very girl for Barry.

Rosamund made no protest against the opinion of this expert. She only said:

"Don't you give the least hint of this to her or any one about here, or you'll be making the biggest mischief you ever made in all your life. Keep your eyes open, and you'll see a good deal that will surprise you."

"Oh, I'm past surprises," exclaimed this *blasé* man of the world. "And as for girls—nothing that a girl could do would surprise me; still—oh, Cora is all right. There's not much the matter with our Cora. But is it her modesty that makes her say she doesn't play the banjo, Rosie?" he added, confidentially.

"It may be her modesty that prevents her from playing the banjo," said Rosamund.

"Great Admiral! isn't it the national instrument in the States?" he cried.

"Perhaps that is why she has nothing to say to it,"

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said Rosamund. "The harp is the national instrument of Ireland, isn't it, but I shouldn't care to hear you play it."

For three days Coralie was happier than she had been since she left America. She never opened a book save only one—a book of dry flies. She ceased writing up her diary. She was as happy as though Bernard Mott had never come into her life.

She made at first several attempts to free herself from the influence of Bertie—many other people had done the same—but she never recovered the ground which she had lost when she had plotted with him in that trout-fishing expedition. It was, as usual, the first step that counted.

And then one day she caught a salmon.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

At the end of a week the Londoners began to arrive. Bertie's scorn of them all found, he thought, inadequate expression when he called them Londoners. Lord and Lady Glasnamara arrived one afternoon, and Bertie tried to get them to go out with him for a cruise in the Daireen. It would set them up after their twelve-mile drive and their seven hours in the train, he declared. But they had their doubts on this point. When he begged them to come, "just to see," they declined to be made the subject of his experiments, but effected a compromise in the matter by eating at dinner a large portion of Coralie's third salmon.

They praised the flavour of the fish, and somehow—so subtle is the effect of well-chosen words—suggested that it owed its flavour to her skill. They praised her looks—she was a new girl entirely, Lord Glasnamara said, pronouncing the word "entirely" as though there were a diphthong in it; he considered this pronunciation had a tone of conciliation to the Irish about it. It hinted at sympathy—that better feeling which he thought should exist between landlord and tenant.

And when the cheeks of Coralie were discussed in full, Lord Glasnamara, with artful artlessness, drew her out on the subject of *salmonidae*. What fly had she used? Had she had a try at the Falls of Lynbeg yet?

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She knew all about the Falls of Lynbeg; but she had not fished there yet—there was too much water that week, she said; but Mickey Breen, the keeper of the waters, said the Falls would be in splendid condition in a few days, provided that the rain kept away.

And what about the grouse, he asked her. Of course she had been on the mountain. Once again she knew all there was to be known about the subject. She and Bertie had spent several hours on the mountain, and had come to the conclusion that the birds were not so wild as Tim Burke, the headkeeper, had made them out to be. Bertie had instructed her regarding the elements of "wildness" in grouse and the cause of this disorder. He had also lectured her on the Psychology of Gamekeepers—only he called them the Tricks of the Trade. The gamekeeper was certain to be called the son of a sea-cook by the bad shots if the birds didn't lie until the guns had come to within a fathom of them; so he invariably discounted possible censure—this was not exactly Bertie's phrase—by announcing that the birds were wild from the first.

Lord Glasnamara expressed himself greatly pleased at her report of everything, and Coralie felt flattered at his assumption that these subjects—matters of fur and feathers—were within her province.

"She would have felt hurt if you had suggested a month ago that she would ever be more interested in the slaughter of salmon and the butchery of birds—I have heard her say those very words—than in the equality of labour and capital and stuff of that sort," said Lady Glasnamara, when Coralie had gone to put on her cap the next day to go out for a walk with

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her host—her host had wondered if she were equal to a saunter of five or six miles, and she had declared that she only wished that the mileage was twenty.

"Poor girl!—poor girl! she did not know herself then," said Lord Glasnamara. "What, do you think that the credit of the transformation is due to Bertie? Nothing of the sort, my dear. It's Ireland that has done it all—Ireland and heredity. Have you never heard of the pointer puppy that can no more help pointing than—than Coralie can help being interested in everything that the Randals were interested in during the thousand years of their residence in this neighbourhood. The greatest sportsman of one age was a Randal, and the greatest poacher of the next was a Randal—perhaps on the whole the poacher is the truer sportsman."

"In fact, now that I come to think of it, the poacher certainly is the truer sportsman. And now that I come to think of it, it was your family who were the real poachers—the Randals were the legitimate owners of the mountains," remarked Lady Glasnamara.

"Ah, no," said her husband; "my family had proved themselves stronger than the Randals, and so became the legitimate owners—that's Ireland, my dear; it's also Nature. Bertie is a very good little chap—how about that azimuth, Bertie? Can you make out an azimuth yet? Oh, no, Rosamund, an azimuth is not, as you suppose, a new cooling drink. Yes, Bertie is all right, and he has his uses; but heredity is a greater power even than so masterful a man as Bertie."

But Bertie still remained at the window gazing out

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over the mountains; he did not remove his hands from his pockets, and thereby Rosamund knew that the arrangement made by his father for taking that walk with Coralie had not been calculated on by him when he had made out his programme for the day. She knew that it had been in his mind to take Coralie out to one of the sea-caves to view the seals that amused themselves on the rocks at its entrance.

And then Coralie entered the hall, clad in her walking-dress and wearing an extremely becoming cap of the same material as the dress. It differed in only a few essentials from the ordinary cap of the game-keeper, but these essentials were essential to its individuality, and the artist who had made the cap for her charged her two guineas for it.

It was well-spent money. Lord Glasnamara, who, like most men, appreciated an effect in woman's dress without having the remotest idea how it was produced, looked at it critically when she entered the hall and stood smiling before him. He thought he had never seen anything so lovely in his life—Rosamund was sure of it, for she could appreciate the cause as well as the effect.

"Yes," he said, "you are—shall I say appropriate?"

"You will never have said a truer word," cried Rosamund. "That's just what she is—appropriate."

And it must be confessed that the impression likely to be produced by this tall girl with the browned face—with the fully exposed, strongly shod feet and ankles—with the fair hair beautifully untidy about that cap, whose simplicity was its perfection, was that she was the sort of girl with whom a man would like to walk over a mountain.

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There she stood, so firm and strong on her feet, her head poised slightly to one side for the moment, which made one think of a pretty bird, and the hand that held the trustworthy stick—the gift of the ancient who had once caught an otter—stretched well out as it rested on the blackthorn.

Seeing her stand thus Lady Glasnamara felt a curious inclination to weep. She thought of that beautiful girl standing in the centre of the hall with Barry Joyce by her side. She thought of the appropriateness—her husband's word—of the descendant of the Randals becoming the Chatelaine of Cashel-na-mara; with the title of Viscountess in the Peerage of England. And because the dream that she had dreamed was not on the way to be realised, she found the greatest difficulty in repressing her tears.

"Come along, my dear," cried Lord Glasnamara from the porch, where he had gone to light his cigar; and Coralie ran like a fawn to the door, waving a good-bye to her friend Bertie.

"Oh, Rosamund—Rosamund, it will kill me—I know it will," said Lady Glasnamara.

"Oh, no," laughed Rosamund, "nothing will happen here to kill you, my dearest mother. We have already seen things happen, and we shall see a good many other occurrences in due time."

"What a transformation! And I thought that she was something of a prig," said the mother.

"I said that she was a woman—a woman disguised in a cloak of education," said the daughter. "Yes, when I saw her delighted when de Reszke, as Romeo, ran Galazzi through the fifth rib as Tybalt, I saw that the cloak of education which she had wrapped

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about her had a rent here and there in it. All she needed was a congenial savage to lure her out of her disguise, and she found one in Bertie."

"I say," said Bertie, coming forward at the sound of his name. "I say, isn't she just rippin'? But where's Barry all this time? Does he fancy he'll find her a sitter? And what does the pater mean by taking her off like—"

But while the people within doors were discussing the development of the exquisite savage out of the unpromising materials that go to the formation of an educated girl, as such is understood in certain parts of the United States, the girl was walking by the side of Lord Glasnamara up the little track among the pines of the slope behind the Castle. They reached the summit, and though the climb of two or three hundred feet was a stiff one, the girl noticed with admiration that her companion was not breathing more rapidly than she was.

"Oh, no," said he, in reply to her compliment, "I haven't lost my wind yet. It's in our family—wind is in our family. We don't lose it until we are eighty—sometimes not even then."

"But you have no practice in London," said Coralie.

"Only by making speeches, I'm sorry to say—long-winded speeches," said Lord Glasnamara. "Well, it's better than nothing. Now isn't that a picture?" He pointed right and left; on the one side lay the lough, a spur of the ridge on which they were walking blocked the line of their sight, cutting off the outer half of the sparkling blue waters and making a lake of the remainder. On the other hand lay Glen Dhu,

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the farther slope bathed in sunlight, the nearer sombre as ever. The tarn in the depths of the glen was spread out like black velvet. The surprise of the double picture was felt by Coralie, as it was by every one who looked upon it. It was a wonderful thing to see. But this picture lay at her feet. Into the distance there stretched a panorama of mountain overlapping mountain, dwindling in colour from the purple-black of the mighty Slieve Gorm to the faint blue-grey of Carn Gillay. And where each mountain sent its rugged edge to make a sharp cut against the slope beyond there was a shading away of lines like the lines of an etching, and these in the softest gradation into the dimness of the distance.

"A picture to remember," said Lord Glasnamara. "There is a man on the other side of the Atlantic who remembers it well, I know. He sees you in the midst of this scene, Coralie. I hope that he never tried to describe any part of it to you, my dear."

"He only gave me the names," said Coralie. "I seem to know all the names; but what is word-painting when such scenery as this comes upon one. Where are the words?"

"Words—pssha!" said Lord Glasnamara, with the air of a man who knows, and therefore smiles. "Words! If every word were a pigment, and every pigment blended with the next, would you be able to see that scene? Words! Come along, my dear. I wonder did your father ever tell you that at one time all that we can see from here was called the Randals' country?"

"The Randals' country? Oh, he used to laugh and say that we were the descendants of the Kings of

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Ireland. But then all the foolish people in the States say that they are descendants of the Kings of Ireland."

"Well, it must be admitted that they had a good many kings in Ireland in those days. At the battle of Clontarf between seventy and eighty were killed, and yet they had enough left to conduct the affairs of the country pretty much the same as before. The translators of Irish words into English are to be blamed. All the kingly gradations in Ireland—and there are a good many of these gradations—were roughly translated 'Kings.' But all the same, the Randals were quite as good as the Plantagenets in their own way, and much more honest. They had a court of their own, and they conferred titles with quite as great impartiality as the Plantagenets. Their kingdom was delimited after the fashion of the times; all that a man could see from that rock with the little hollow at the top—the Cairn Ard-Ri, it was called—was the Randals' kingdom."

And then the last of the Randals went up the slope which was crowned by the curious rock with a hollow basin at the top, and standing on the rugged rim of this natural hollow, she looked to east and west, to north and south, saying:

"The Randals' kingdom!"

Lord Glasnamara took off his hat, when she had reached the top, and stood looking up at her. As soon as she had spoken, he motioned her to remain where she was, and detaching a small gold seal from his watch-chain, he knelt on one knee and offered it to her in all humility.

She laughed, looking down at him.

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"What is the meaning of this?" she cried.

"It represents the acknowledgment by the tributary noble of the Kingship of the Randals," said Lord Glasnamara. "A piece of gold was a triennial offering made by the subordinate chieftains to the Randal when he stood upon the Cairn Ard-Ri. Two hundred years have passed since the last offering was made. Permit me to restore the custom to its proper place in the national ceremonial. Hail, my Princess of the Rosses! I humbly acknowledge your suzerainty, and kneeling at the foot of the Cairn Ard-Ri, swear unalterable fealty."

Once, and only once, Coralie gave a laugh. Then she became grave, and getting slowly from her place, took the gold seal from his hand.

"I accept your tribute with all my love," she said.

She held out her hand to him in the gracious manner of regality, and he raised it to his lips. Then he rose, and she put her face up to him to be kissed. He kissed her gently on each cheek, and he perceived that she was trembling with emotion.

Then she smiled and held out the seal to him.

"It has served as a symbol," she said. "You will take it back."

"No," he said; I will not take it back. Look at it, my dear. You will see that it is cut with the arms of my family."

"That is why I return it to you," she said.

"Nay, that is why you must keep it. You may have need of it one day."

"One day! I don't understand. One day—"

"The seal is a symbol."

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“Of the friendship of the Joyces and the Randals? Even so. As such it will ever be dear to me.”

“Of the friendship of the Joyces and the Randals. Come along, Coralie; I have to give you another chapter in the history of your family.”

CHAPTER XXXIX

They went on together along the ridge of the mountain, and in an hour reached the holy well with its Celtic cross. Several peasants were engaged at their devotions around both. Then instead of descending to Glen Dhu on the road taken by the car on the day of her arrival, Coralie, by the side of her guide, crossed the path into the little wood where the round tower raised its conical summit, and then up the lowest of the slopes of the range of Slieve Gorm. Soon they were deep among the heather, and after a mile of gradual ascent they entered the Gap of Duncrien—one of those narrow gorges which divide the mountains of that range. One side of the gap is precipitate, and the sun has never touched it since the world began. Black and barren, its sheer face is seamed by many a ledge, but all are so irregular and so narrow that no foot has ever trodden them. Under the point of a rock that juts out from the sheer wall there is the eerie of an eagle, and the splendid birds may be seen circling above the peaks, and strangers to the gap say, "What a fine hawk!"

• Lord Glasnamara and Coralie went along the track on the side of the gap that looked southward, and after a mile or two of winding in and out among the crags, a sudden turn on the slope, made at less than a right angle, brought before them in a flash the splen-

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did desolation of Glen Gorm. The long sheet of water that spreads itself through the breadth of the glen was black as a small mountain tarn, and its blackness dwindled into the brown soil of the bog that surrounded its shallow borders. But all among the peaty plain were hundreds of bog-holes, shining like silver water in some places, and in others shimmering in a certain purple iridescence. Further along, the streaks of royal blue, of livid orange, and of gorgeous crimson made up the chromatic wonder of an Irish bog waste.

From the low rushes of the nearer bank of the lake a solitary drake arose, and fled with flapping wings so close to the surface of the still mere that now and again a feather brushed the water and sent the tiny ripples in motion to right and left, marking the track of the bird.

Coralie stood watching the flying drake until it curved away to the opposite bank, and in an unlooked-for second the satin gloss of its blue neck and wings flashed in the sunlight, and the bird dropped reluctantly into the water, and prolonged its flight for many yards after its feet had touched the surface.

She gave a sigh, and stood looking across the lake to where the brown turf-stacks were piled on one side on to the ruins of the Abbey of Clonmoyle. The solitary wall with its oriel window faced her. The light shone through the hollow of the rose window that the ivy had not yet choked.

She gave a sigh.

"Yes," said Lord Glasnamara; "the scene did not seem so desolate until the drake appeared."

There was a long pause before she said:

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"Shall we go any farther?"

"You are not tired, and we have not yet reached the spot for which we set out," said Lord Glasnamara.

"I am not tired; but—should we see anything more to-day?" she asked.

"Come along," he said.

He walked on for some distance. But she remained standing with her face set to the ruin of that oriel window—a whisper in stone of the days when Ireland had been an island of churches and schools and abbeys.

He turned and watched her. Her youthful figure was outlined against the slope, the light making the fawn-grey of her dress appear almost white. She might have been a figure carved to represent the Spirit of Liberty.

He wondered if she were such a spirit.

He knew that she was when she got beside him and put her hand in his in an impulse that would have seemed unaccountable to any one else, but which was quite intelligible to him.

Without a word they went on together for nearly a mile, until they reached the northern termination of the lake. Then they left the track on the glen-slope and crossed over the heathery ground to the nearer of the low, billowy hills that ranged to the west. Here, in the shelter of a long, narrow valley, the remains of a few mud walls of cabins were still standing. A tattered thatch still adhered to one half-ruined gable, and here and there was a rough-hewn post that suggested some attempt at a fence, and not far off were heaps of loose stones, showing that a field

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or two had been cleared close at hand and put into some sort of cultivation.

"You are wondering why I have brought you here?" he said.

"No, no; I am only wondering where I saw all this before," she answered. "I have seen it all somewhere, I know—was it in a dream?"

"You saw it all, my dear, because your father never slept a night without seeing it all," said Lord Glasnamara. "That cabin with the bit of thatch still mouldering on the gable wall was the last stronghold of the Randals, Princes of Glen Dhu, Chieftains of the Rosses. Look inside through the broken doorway, Coralie, and you will see the room in which your father and his father were born."

A look of amazement came into Coralie's face as she glanced towards the half-ruined cabin and then at the man who had given her its history.

"What—there—there?" she said in a whisper. "How could it be possible—there?"

"There have been heroes among the long line of Randals, Coralie," said Lord Glasnamara, "but to my eyes no more heroic figures appear than your grandfather, who reclaimed this mountain-side and cultivated it for the support of his wife and their eight children. Just think of it all, Coralie, daughter and heiress of Denis Randal, the great American millionaire—just think of a man and his wife and their eight children living in the two rooms of that cabin! Just think how this miserable patch of land was snatched bit by bit, wrested foot by foot, from the barrenness of the hillside. The hillside has claimed it once more, but these stones piled up in rude cairns bear

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testimony to the fight—the fight of a hero with fate.”

“And he was my grandfather?” said Coralie.

“He was your grandfather, and he fought the fight for life with success. He had reclaimed close upon two acres here—the boundaries of his patch had long ago been lost; only here and there the posts of a fence, the ruin of a stone wall remain. But he was successful for years. And then came the awful days of ’48. Its history has never been written. It can never be written. Those who saw something of it died under it. Thousands of men, women, and children perished of starvation in the bogs and in the ditches—I cannot talk of it—cannot think of it. I heard the story of your grandfather from an old gamekeeper. His wife died first, then child after child went, until at last only one remained. In his father’s arms he lay waiting for death in a ditch on the hillside. Death came, but not to the child. His life was saved by his father’s feeding him with an egg that a rat had found.”

“Terrible—terrible! And he became my father?”

“He became your father years after that year of terror. The keeper who found the child still alive in the arms of his dead father carried him to Cashel-namara, and he remained there until the Castle was shut up. The distress of the peasants fell upon the landlords. We had to go to England. We said that we were starving also; but the way the nobles starve is not the way the peasants starve. It was then that your father went back to the cabin in which he was born, and tried to take up the work of reclamation where it had been dropped by his father. He suc-

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ceeded in a manner. He lived here alone, and the potatoes were growing once more. It was the year after I married that I came upon him after an interval of over ten years. We were back at the Castle, where we had been children together, and I walked out here now and again to see him. I was surprised to find him so well educated and so intelligent. I offered to do something for him—to give him a position on the estate; but he refused everything that I offered. I could not understand what he meant by leading his lonely life; but after a time I found out what were his aspirations. A secret society had been formed for the establishing of an Irish republic—they called themselves Fenians—and he was an active member of the organisation. I learned all about it from the chief constabulary officer, who had daily information of the conspiracy, gained from the usual source—the Irish informer. The men who had taken an oath to be brothers were in daily communication with the police, every man trying to hang his brother. The government were simply waiting for the right moment to make arrests all round, and a warrant for the arrest of your father was brought me to sign. I had a lonely walk one night to him across these hills. I showed him the unsigned warrant, and also the informations upon the strength of which it was made out. At first he would not hear of deserting 'The Cause,' as he called it; but when I showed him eight of the ten men who constituted the local centre were informers, he yielded. I brought him here shortly after midnight, and within an hour I had sailed with him in my yacht for Queenstown. Three days later he was on his way to America. That's the

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story of the cabin beside you, my Coralie. I think that it has interested you. Your father, when I saw him in America a few years ago, asked me if some day I would show you all that remains of his cabin, and tell you all there was to be told about it. I promised, and—well, we are here to-day.'

• She stood with her eyes fixed upon the ruined gable end of the cabin—the black stain made by the sods of turf which had long years before been piled up against it was still to be seen above the growth of weeds. She did not speak a word; and Lord Glasnamara, believing that he understood something of what was in her heart at that moment, got upon his feet and walked slowly away, leaving her alone in front of the mud cabin that had been as closely associated with the fortunes of her family as the Castle, the majestic remains of which she had seen on the evening of her arrival.

• He strolled down to the brink of the lake. His narrative of her father's story to Coralie had stimulated his own recollection of the details of that night when he had crossed the mountains to warn Denis Randal that he would be arrested the next day if he remained in Ireland. He remembered how the man had met him at the door of the cabin. He held an old gun in his hand—one of the many obsolete weapons which had been sold by an enterprising shopkeeper in a Galway village in view of the impending rising. He remembered how Denis Randal had, in an outburst of that patriotism which had become a passion with him, threatened to shoot his visitor unless he made a promise to keep secret all that he knew about the organisation.

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“That was the moment that his visitor showed him the deposition that made him aware of the fact that one, and one only, of all the “brethren” was not a traitor. Once again he saw the expression that came to the face of the dupe as he held the tallow candle over the police document, moving the flame along the lines that told him of the monstrous villainy of the wretches who had sworn to regard him as a brother. And then the next expression that came to his face—Lord Glasnamara remembered it well—an expression that meant revenge. The cabin had rung with his cries for vengeance—

Lord Glasnamara laughed at this stage of his reminiscences. He had seen Denis Randal in his counting-house in Boston, facing a “tape” and a battery of telephones, a phonograph, yawning, but alert, beside his desk, and the incongruity of the thought that that man was the same as the one who had been the wretched dupe of a band of ignorant peasant-traitors made laughter irresistible.

He returned to where he had left Coralie. She had seated herself on the heather of the slope above the ruins, but she was no longer looking at that broken gable wall with the black stains of the peat upon it; her eyes were turned towards the west.

“Well, my dear, would you think of coming home now?” he asked, as he offered her a hand to help her to her feet.

“Home?” she said, in low and wistful voice. “Home? Oh, yes; I am ready to go with you to the Castle.”

“It was your father’s home for fifteen years,” said he. “It was his dearest wish that you might one day

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sleep beneath its roof—that you might one day say of it, no matter what part of the world you might be in, as I now say, ‘Let us go home.’ ”

She scarcely spoke a word during the walk to the Castle. Only when she got beside the Cairn of the Ard-Ri she stopped and laughed for a moment.

CHAPTER XL

“Lady Glasnamara frankly professed herself unable to fathom the tactics of her husband—tactics was the word she employed, explaining that tactics are the last resource of the tactless—in regard to his announcement that he had just written an invitation to Bernard Mott to pay a visit of a fortnight’s duration to Cashel-na-mara.

“Tactics?” said his lordship, with his accustomed assumption of innocence. “I have no tactics. There is nothing that calls for an exercise of tact or tactics. I will not have it assumed that—that we have motives—secondary motives in anything that we do. I will not have it suggested that we are contriving to compass our own ends.”

“No one could make such a suggestion,” said his wife. “Still that man Mott—and I thought that when we had her here—and our autumn is to be made hideous because she listened to that wind-bag.”

“There is one fact that we cannot blink—namely, the fact that Coralie has promised to marry Bernard Mott,” said Lord Glasnamara. “She is our guest, and we want to—to—to make her happy, do we not?”

“Ah, now you are talking sensibly—yes, to make her happy. I agree with you. I acknowledge the value of a phrase—a lockstitch phrase. To make her happy. Well?”

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"Well? I disown any knowledge of the mechanism of a sewing-machine. How can a girl be happy apart from her lover, my dear?"

"Is a girl's lover the one who loves her or the one whom she loves?"

Lord Glasnamara smiled.

"Don't you think we could manage to combine the two if we were to give her plenty of Bernard Mott?" he whispered.

"I wash my hands clear of the whole business," said Lady Glasnamara. "You will be telling me to trust in Providence next."

"I will not go so far, my lady. I only go to the length of asking you to trust to your husband."

"Ah, there you rush off into the other extreme. Did you not say that her father would never give his consent? We trusted in the father, did we not?—the father and the portrait of Bernard Mott."

"Denis is, I believe, cleverer than both of us put together."

"He has not shown it yet. You saw her wearing that cap—and Barry is still in town. Bernard Mott will be here before Barry."

"Even so. If you fancy for a moment that Barry's sense of honour—but you keep your eye on her face when I break the news to her at lunch."

Lady Glasnamara looked at her husband with a smile that had no bitterness in it, and she went her ways until lunch-time. But then she looked at Coralie when her husband said to Bertie, who was complaining that Coralie's lessons in navigation had recently been interrupted more frequently than any one with her welfare at heart could wish:

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"You must make up your mind to bring your lessons to a close by the end of the week, my boy."

Bertie looked puzzled for a moment; then he shook his head, saying:

"I can put a ready girl like Cora up to a good many sharp things inside three days; but I don't approve of cramming. I think I'll spread them over a month."

"Ah, you'll not have a chance of that. Mr. Bernard Mott is coming," said his father.

"What?" cried Coralie. Bertie had his eyes upon her face. He, as well as his mother, saw the curious expression that followed her flush. There was a pause of several seconds' duration before she said, in a lower tone:

"Is Bernard Mott coming here—to this house, Lord Glasnamara?"

Lord Glasnamara sent the searchlight of his smile round the table, concentrating its rays at last upon Coralie.

"I thought that I would keep the news—the—the—joyful news as a pleasant surprise for you, my dear," he whispered.

"Ah," said Coralie, and really her exclamation had the breathing of a sigh about it. "Ah, I did not know that—that—but he may not be able to come."

And really she had the air of one who suggests an agreeable alternative.

"We can hope for the best," said Lady Glasnamara, enigmatically.

"I do not care for surprises unless I arrange for them beforehand," remarked Rosamund.

"Well, if ever I do a kind action again!" cried

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Lord Glasnamara. "In my innocence I fancied that—but he will come; oh, do not doubt that Mr. Mott will come, even though he never did see you in that cap of yours!"

"Yes, I think he may be depended on to come," said Lady Glasnamara, in a tone that somehow suggested the last words on the subject.

Rosamund made a remark about the cucumber.

And all through this little conversation Bertie kept turning his eyes from every speaker to Coralie. A well-defined frown settled down upon his features as certain abhorrent possibilities dawned upon his intelligence.

When he rose from the table he put his hands deep down in his pockets and kicked—accidentally—the lower part of the oak panelling under the window to which he had walked. He stared at the rain, which was coming down the way it does on the seaboard of a country that has the Atlantic Ocean as a reservoir.

Lord Glasnamara lighted a cigar, and perceived that Coralie had had sufficient time to collect herself. They were alone in the hall. Bertie had gone defiantly upstairs, revealing the pessimistic outlook by the extra merriment which he threw into the act of whistling.

"I am so sorry if I have made a mistake," said Lord Glasnamara. "That is the worst of being a man; we go blundering and bungling ahead—but perhaps you were only surprised."

"You are too kind to me," said she. "I did not look for this particular act of kindness from you. I feel that you—that is—oh, why should you consider

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me only? Have you not seen that Lady Glasnamara—that Rosamund—well, they do not care about Bernard Mott."

"And do you?" asked Lord Glasnamara; and the question was so direct that she felt as if she had struck her. She stared at him for a moment, and then said:

"What can you mean by such a question, Lord Glasnamara?"

"Is it not explicit enough?" said he. "I asked you, do you—do you perceive that they do not care about Mr. Mott?"

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" she cried. "I thought—oh, yes; I see daily that poor Bernard is not—not what you would call a *persona grata* with them. But indeed I do not blame them—I think, you know, that he is wrong in some things."

"You must not think so just yet," said he. "Do you know, my dear girl, I have been as observant of you as you have clearly been of Lady Glasnamara and Rosamund, and I have noticed an unsatisfied expression on your sweet face now and again. I want to banish that look, Coralie, and—and that's why I asked Mr. Mott to pay us a visit. I hope that I shall see nothing but delight on your face after next week."

"Indeed, I have been perfectly happy ever since I came here," she cried. "You have been mistaken about my expression. It only means that I have been thinking—"

"About Mr. Mott—quite so," he said.

"No, not once," she asserted, with extreme emphasis. "I have been thinking about that walk

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which we had together over the mountains. I have been thinking about my father and his terrible life here—and of your kindness to him.”

“Don’t talk of that, my dear; when I look at you, and think—”

“Gratitude! Ah, Lord Glasnamara, when I think of all that you have done for us, is it wonderful that there should be now and again an unsatisfied look in my face, knowing as I do that it would be impossible to repay you?”

“The account is squared long ago; it was squared the day you arrived in England. I have come to think of you as my second daughter. When my son Barry brings me a second daughter my prayer is that she may be as like you as possible. I want to compass your happiness; that is why I have asked Mr. Mott to come to you. But you must not get it into your head that he is wrong in some things—that, alas! is a knowledge that will come soon enough. Just now you must look on him as perfect.”

“I wish you had not asked him, Lord Glasnamara. They do not like him. You should have considered Lady Glasnamara and Rosamund—and—do you like him yourself?”

“I like you. Yes, in a sort of way. I like you and you like him—that’s how I like him. Nay, I would even go so far as to say that I should like you even if you—”

“Detested him?”

“I was going to say, even if you understood him as well as I do—that’s what I was going to say. However—”

He stopped short.

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“I am not sure that I quite understand you,” said Coralie.

“You have made an honest attempt to do so, at any rate,” said he, in a tone that seemed to add mysticism to mystery, as he left the hall.

She was left alone with the thought that Bernard Mott, the man whom she had promised to marry, was coming to the Castle, and that thought was, as a matter of fact, distressing to her.

She had a strong sense of incongruity in many matters. That was why she had been so greatly disappointed in the House of Commons. The personnel of the Institution was unworthy of the Institution. She had heard certain of the Irish members talk, and she felt that they were unworthy of Ireland. She thought of Bernard Mott talking beneath the cliffs of Lough Omeragh—in the purple depths of Glen Dhu—talking—talking—talking—and the picture conjured up by her imagination was one of shocking incongruity. She thought of him as the pale-faced enthusiast of the lecture-hall. He was part and parcel of the squared ornamental rafters, of the sickly buff-tinted walls with their neat stencilled “dado,” a relic of the days when the “dado” in decoration meant the extreme limit of art; but now the “dado” is as extinct as the dodo.

Bernard Mott existed in her mind as part of these sham simplicities. Facing the table with the green baize cover and the tumbler of water, he was all right—even admirable, though talking. But what would all his talk amount to in the hollow of Lough Omeragh when its young lions were roaring out of the depths of its caves? How unconvincing would all his

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rhetoric be on the swelling side of Slieve Gorm? Nay, to go no farther than the old oak hall where she was standing—how incongruous would he be at the side of the antlers of the old Irish elk!

She saw that he would be as far out of place in such surroundings as Cormac MacCormac, the ancient harper, would be in a London drawing-room—not Lady Glastonbury's, where nothing was appropriate except incongruities—or as Con O'Carolan, the player of the bagpipes, would be in a Richter orchestra; and so she was led on to feel as if the coming of Bernard meant the annihilation of all her delight—her solemn delight at being in the midst of her Irish land.

But then she reflected that she had given her promise to Bernard. She was to marry him, and hand in hand they were to march onward for the healing of the nations. Those were his words, and they had at one time meant much to her. She wondered why they did not mean so much to her now.

She went to the window at which Bertie had stood a short time before, and tried to realise once again the splendour of the prospect which that phrase had opened out to her. She tried to feel that the prospect of establishing a brotherhood that should include all humanity in its circle was nobler than the prospect of doing something for Ireland. She asked herself if it were possible that her views had become narrowed during the fortnight she had been in Ireland. Was this one of the effects of living in Ireland—this feeling that nothing in the world was worth working for—nay, that nothing in the world was worth talking about—save only Ireland?

She wondered if it was one of the mysteries of this

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land of mystery, that people who breathed the breath of the ocean that lapped and wrapped its coast should forever feel the littleness of the rest of the world. She wondered if the glamour of the gloom of its glens compelled this feeling; if the mystery of its mountains was this feeling and none other?

“Let him come!” she said out loud at last, as if she were addressing the Genius of Ireland, as it would be depicted by a conscientious French artist—in the midst of rain such as was now driving through the glen as she looked forth. “Let him come,” she cried, defiantly. “I have promised to marry him, and I do not regret it—no, no; I do not regret it; only—he cannot compel me to marry him until I please, and that will only be when Ireland is—Ireland.”

She, too, had caught some of the vagueness and mystery of this land of mist and mystery.

CHAPTER XLI

And he came.

He did not seem nearly so incongruous an element of the dripping landscape as she expected he would appear. It had been raining steadily for three days; but the rain made no more difference to the people of the Castle in their walking and their fishing than it did to the salmon at the Falls or the mackerel of the lough. Coralie had come to think of the grey, moisture-laden mist that billowed through the glens and surged about the peaks of the mountains as an added charm to the natural effect visible hourly in the landscape; and Bertie had told her that the sooner the people living on the coasts of Ireland came to think of this particular phenomenon as an added charm to the landscape the better it would be for themselves.

He had his umbrella.

But after all, Lady Glasnamara had once gone for a walk with an umbrella, so that Bernard Mott did not seem ridiculous dismounting from the car and endeavouring to preserve an obviously new portmanteau from the slanting rain by an artifice.

Bertie guffawed like a common peasant at the sight of the new portmanteau.

And then there was a hat-box.

Bertie ran into the hall.

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But really there was nothing about Bernard Mott that was ridiculous. And as for his omission to bring evening-dress garments with him, Lord Glasnamara good-humouredly pooh-poohed the necessity for an apology in regard to this matter. Bernard, in order to put himself right, had, on the appearance of the rest of the party in conventional dinner dress, made an apology.

The next evening Lord Glasnamara appeared in a velvet jacket; but Bertie was more scrupulous than before in the way he tied his white tie.

He confided in his sister that Mott was an outsider, and his sister told him not to be impudent.

But when, on the second day after Bernard's arrival, he made the attempt to be patronisingly pleasant to Bertie, referring to him as "the Admiral" or "Captain Costigan," he found that he had made a mistake. Bertie was not nearly so genial as he had believed him to be.

He found this out the moment he had called Bertie "Captain Costigan."

Bertie looked at him for a long time. They were all drinking tea together in the afternoon on a mountainous lawn in front of the Castle.

"I say," he said at last, "aren't you the man that spoilt the bishop's meeting at St. James's Hall, and took possession of the platform?"

Mr. Mott had a notion that his feat had appealed strongly to the imagination of the naval man. It had a certain element of dash and daring in it, beyond doubt.

"Well, yes; I think that I had a hand in that business," he replied, with a tolerant smile. He wished

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to show that though one of the leaders of a great social revolution, still he could answer civilly so humble a person as a midshipman; weren't middies the toys of the navy—not to be taken seriously?

"Well, you had a hand in a piece of brazen-faced impudence, my good fellow," said Bertie.

"Hush, Bertie," said Lady Glasnamara, reprovingly.

"Why should he hush?" cried Rosamund. "My brother is an officer in her Majesty's fleet, and he is entitled to reply in his own fashion to any pleasantry that may be attempted at his expense. Mr. Mott will bear me out. Mr. Mott is one of the—the—loudest advocates of free speech. The advocates of free speech cannot object if others besides themselves speak freely."

"Bertie has no right to say anything—anything nasty to a guest of ours," said Lady Glasnamara.

"I apologise officially—strictly officially," said Bertie. "No matter how great a bounder a chap may be, I know that it is bad taste to speak the truth about him so long as he is on one's own deck. That's why I apologise—officially—for having said the truth to Mr. Mott."

"Nothing could be more handsome than that," said Rosamund. "I hope that Mr. Mott is quite satisfied with the *amende*."

"I am perfectly satisfied, and I am quite ready to shake hands with my young friend," said Mr. Mott.

"There now. Could anything be more magnanimous?" cried Rosamund. "But I don't think he need trouble himself going through that formality with his young friend. Shaking hands officially always sug-

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gests to me the preliminary to a fight, and there will be no fighting here."

"But I think it would be as well for Bernard to remember that Bertie is an officer in the British Navy, and I don't know that any one in the world can be better than that," said Coralie, stoutly.

"I knew I could trust you to say the right thing, Cora," said the boy. "And if you don't mind, I'll shake hands with you instead of Mr. Mott."

As he was sitting next to her, there was no strain in this demonstration of his, and there was certainly nothing official about it.

But on Mr. Mott's face a cloud appeared. Rosamund saw that he was looking reproachfully at Coralie, and that Coralie saw that he was trying to make her see that reproach was in his glance and a cloud upon his face; but Coralie would not look at him.

Then Mr. Mott did a manly thing, but like most manly things it was a diplomatically foolish thing. Manliness is the opposite to diplomacy. He disclaimed sympathy with the sentiment expressed by his *fiancée*. It came upon him with a shock to hear Coralie, his once tractable pupil—the one who had always been most sympathetic in his teaching of the iniquity of war—boldly proclaim herself on the side of the fighting men.

"I should hope that a vocation of peace, however humble it may be, is nobler than any that aims at the destruction of one's fellow-creatures," said Mr. Mott.

"Skittles," said Bertie.

Everybody laughed.

Mr. Mott turned his head gravely round to Bertie—

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an oratorical grace which he had occasionally found to be disconcerting to a conscientious objector.

• “I don’t think that I quite caught the argument of our young—” •

“Ph, stow that stuff about our young friend,” cried Bertie, interrupting him. “You heard my argument well enough, you know. I said ‘Skittles.’”

“I’m afraid I can’t admit that derision is argument,” said Mr. Mott.

“If derision isn’t argument, why did you turn your head round in that slow way unless to show that you wished to make light of me?” asked the boy. “But everybody knows that derision and ridicule and the rest serve the purpose of argument very well. Argument was invented to irritate people whom you differ from, and can’t you do this well enough by ridicule? Why did you call me your young friend unless to prejudice people against me; and I suppose you’ll tell us next that prejudice is no argument.”

Mr. Mott had an electrical gleam in his eyes, but he was still tolerant and smiling—in a sort of way.

“I’m afraid that in spite of your long experience of the world •” he began, and once again Bertie interrupted him.

“You’d do well to stow that, too, Mr. Mott,” he said. “I’ve been taught as a science how to observe men, and how to apply the results of my observations. I have been in command of bodies of pretty rough men in my time, and they knew that I could manage them. What would you do if you were ordered to launch the starboard galley and stand by to man and arm the boat? Do you fancy that you’d get through the business by making a speech to the men, as they

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do on the stage? Suppose you were ordered to fight a Gatling in one of the tops, what would you do? Oh, don't you sneer at me for having no experience. I was a year aboard the *Britannia*, and I've been for eighteen months a part of the Mediterranean squadron—the strongest force that the world has ever known. Come along, Cora; you promised to sail across to Kilbreda with me to meet the pater and bring him home. It's about time we started, isn't it? Mr. Mott can come if he likes; there's not much of a sea on, after all. It looks worse than it is really. Only there's a bit of a draught blowing from the nor'-west. Oh, we'll dust across in half an hour. Come along, Mr. Mott."

But Mr. Mott did not come along. He had the previous day listened to the persuasions of Coralie and his young friend, and had not been quite the same man for the rest of the evening. It was in his mind that Coralie should not go, either, and he was about to make a signal to her to this effect when the naval man, with some little adroitness, got between him and the girl. Bertie knew perfectly well what was in the mind of his enemy, and he had also been made acquainted with the full duty of a convoy. The protective craft was in cases of emergency to take up a station between the ship that was being convoyed and the enemy.

He felt that Coralie had placed herself in his charge, and he would not be doing his duty were he to allow Bernard Mott to catch her eye for a second. So he manœuvred about, making remarks upon the state of the weather, and the possible consequences of a sudden shifting of the wind from the nor'-nor'-

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west to the west-sou'-west, until the trim-built craft that was in his charge was hailing him from a safe distance. •

He could see that Mr. Mott was desperately angry at the success of his naval tactics, and he was greatly pleased. If he could only succeed in keeping Mr. Mott thoroughly angry, he felt that something might eventually come of it. Mr. Mott might, for example, be induced to knock his cap off, or do something like that, and then—

He sung out a hail in reply to Coralie's, and then ran to join her on the little track that led over the hill that lay between Cashel-na-mara and the lough. They had crossed the hill, and were actually descending the cliff path to the natural dock where the Daireen was berthed, before Bertie spoke.

"I say, Cora," said he, "I hope you don't think that I was too cheeky to Mr. Mott?"

"I don't think that you were in the least cheeky," she replied, promptly. "What right had Mr. Mott to address you as he did?"

"Oh, well, so far as that goes, a chap like me shouldn't be over-particular. I've been called worse than that in my time," said Bertie.

"I daresay, but—Mr. Mott—"

"That's it. I haven't known him for what you'd call a long time, and he hasn't the sort of way about him that would make a chap overlook a bit of freedom; although I daresay when you come to know him he may seem quite—quite—oh, Cora, Cora, you're never going to marry Mott?"

"Oh, yes, Bertie; I have given Mr. Mott my promise to marry him."

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"What signifies a promise in a case of this sort? Who thinks the worse of a girl for changing her mind about marrying one man in particular? It's not like promising to pay back money that you've borrowed, or to ride a horse in a particular race. Give me leave to tell him that you've changed your mind. You never could marry a chap that goes about habitually with a new portmanteau."

"But the point is that I've not—no, I've not changed my mind. I mean to marry Mr. Mott. Only by marrying him can I succeed in doing all that I hope to be able to do in my life."

"Oh, you'll never marry him—I know that it would be impossible for you to—look here, Cora; I'll not be hard on you; I'll show you that I wish to deal with you fairly. I'll compromise the matter with you, if you give me your word that you'll not marry him for—shall we make it five years—you're still quite young, you know; let me put it at five years?"

"Five years? Oh, nonsense, Bertie! I have no intention of marrying any one for a long time, but—five years."

"Oh, I only began with five years! I knew that you'd beat me down. Well, we'll say two years; there now, that's a concession."

"I shouldn't like to bind myself down—that is, I mean, that I should, only that people—I'll tell you what I'll do, Bertie, old boy, I'll give you my promise that I'll not marry Bernard Mott for a year."

"And a day—make it a year and a day; a year and a day is like a guinea; it's more professional."

"Well, I throw in the day."

"Shake. I'm quite satisfied if you are. It will be

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jolly rum if something doesn't happen inside a year and a day—something that will do for Mott. Providence does some queer things in the way of marriages; but for you and Mott—oh, no! that would be too great a scandal altogether."

"And now you must never talk to me in this way again, my dear Bertie. You must never say anything against Mr. Mott in my presence."

"I won't, Cora. I admit that it is in the very worst taste. You wouldn't catch the pater doing anything like that."

There was a pause before Coralie said:

"It was he who asked Bernard Mott here, when we might have been so happy."

There was a complaining note in her voice which Bertie did not fail to detect.

"Do you mean that—that—oh, let us hurry down to the boat. I'm getting a bit confused," he cried. "Come along. I wonder if there's a logarithm for every girl in the world? I feel that if I only had the right logarithm, I'd be all right in working them out. Oh, yes; some one should publish a table of logarithms for dealing with girls."

"My dear Bertie," said Coralie, "how can you expect to understand us when we can't understand ourselves? That's the worst of it; we don't understand ourselves. And the book of logarithms that might be of some use to us is lost." •

CHAPTER XLII

On the precipitous lawn the three people continued to sit after the two had gone away. It could not be said that they formed an entirely congenial party. They had not the tea as a topic to go on with. Lady Glasnamara wondered how the Atlantic would do, since they had exhausted the potato-cakes as a conversational thread in the early part of the afternoon. But when she looked at Mr. Mott her heart failed her; she could not drag the Atlantic into such company.

Rosamund was frankly phraseless. She yawned in the face of the purple peak that stood up before where she was sitting—yawned even before she picked up the *Contemporary Review* that had somehow found its way to the Castle.

Then it was that Mr. Mott pulled out his watch and announced that he had his letters to write—some important letters.

"One must not neglect one's correspondence, must one, Mr. Mott?" said Lady Glasnamara, smiling sympathetically, she hoped—photographically, she was afraid. Rosamund perceived that her fears were not wholly groundless; her mother's smile was of the sort that faces a camera when the operator gives the word.

Mr. Mott said that one of his letters was important, and walked towards the Castle.

"I read in some paper the other day that the peo-

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ple who make the most money nowadays are those who manufacture coats ready-made," said Lady Glasnamara, dreamily.

"The poor women who sew the pieces together only make three shillings a week working fifteen hours a day," said Rosamund. "And he boasts of being a socialist."

Lady Glasnamara tried to look as if she did not quite understand the connection of socialism and ready-made garments, but she did not try very hard; she thought it safer to shake her head.

"I prefer tailor-made Norfolk jackets to even the most advertised tourists' suits," said she. "But that's no reason why Bertie should be—ah—"

"Truthful?" suggested Rosamund, daintily. "My dearest mother, Bertie is our best friend at this critical juncture—Bertie and his boat—Bertie and the ready-made, highly-advertised tourist's suit. Coralie has been wishing for some time that one particular tourist's suit had never left the nail on which it was hung in Mr. Phillip's warehouse. Papa is really cleverer than the members of his immediate *entourage* give him credit for being."

"You really think that Coralie is—is inclined to—to—oh, what do you think?"

"I think that Coralie appreciates tailor-made garments with the best of us," said Rosamund. "She also appreciates an English boy—a thing she never saw before; most of all, she appreciates the mountains, the glens, the waters of her own country—the country which she has loved as all of us have loved it, not knowing why—Ireland, the dear mother of us all."

"Well, I can only hope that that man, Mr. Mott—"

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“Psha! that man Mott, as you are pleased to call him, is a *quantité négligeable*, although at the present moment he is pacing his room trying to think out a scheme by which, without incurring any personal risk, he may be revenged upon Bertie. He will probably come to the conclusion that his safest plan would be to revenge himself upon Bertie through the medium of Coralie.”

And Rosamund's solution was not at fault. At that very moment Mr. Bernard Mott was actually pacing his room with his hands tightly clenched as he thought of how he—he—Bernard Mott, who had once faced a bishop and an earl in a public place, driving them from their own platform—had been ridiculed by a boy—“a brat of a boy” was the phrase which he muttered through his teeth.

And she had taken the part of the young cub who had insulted him—she, Coralie Randal, who had promised to marry him—she whom he had made to feel that she was being honoured by his attentions—she to whom he had promised the distinction which attaches to the wife of a distinguished man; she had in a moment flung in his face those precepts which he fancied he had engrafted upon her—those principles of thought as opposed to the instinct of brute force.

That was the worst of it; the girl had sided with the boy who had ridiculed him. She had not shown herself to be indignant at the way he had been treated, though a month before she would certainly have done so.

He would not have so much minded if she had remained passive during the incident that was so humiliating to his *amour propre*, but she had not remained passive; she had coldly and deliberately—

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Good heavens! was it possible that he—he, Bernard Mott, was losing his power over her? Was it possible that she wanted to impress this fact upon him?

At the thought his hands unclenched themselves and hung limp by his sides. His hot passion of anger and indignation became cool. He felt that he would have to treat her very cautiously. It would never do for him to lose her. Yes, he must be wary in his treatment of her; and though he did not know much about her temperament, he knew enough to feel certain that if he receded to the extent of a single step from the position which he occupied in respect to her from the first—the position of the teacher, the man with the mission—he should lose her. He would not make such a mistake. His power lay in his boldness, in his fearlessness, his facing of her without a falter.

For another hour he remained in his room, thinking out the whole question of how to regain the power which he had once possessed over her; and by the time he had come to a conclusion as to the details of the course he meant to pursue for the carrying out of his purpose, he heard the noise of the return of the boy and the girl from the boat with Lord Glasnamara. They brought with them the breath of the Atlantic, and it seemed to sweep round the ivy of the Castle walls with their laughter.

They were all laughing—Coralie loudest of all. He had good reason to be suspicious of the people with whom he was in the habit of coming in contact in the spirit of brotherhood, and now he had a suspicion that Coralie and the others were making merry at his expense. He was not quite sure, but it seemed

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very like as if they had been telling Lord Glasnamara how he had been discomfited.

And then he heard the chat of the three with some of the hangers on; it was all about the birds on the mountain and the trout in the river, and the fellow's reports, which were meant to be strictly official, called for further laughter and a funny interchange of phrases, the import of which he could not compass. He hated this place, with its enigmatical people, and he detested their queer phrases.

And when he had put on his best coat and had come downstairs to the drawing-room, he found his host with a letter in his hand, and every one in the room seemed in high spirits, while Lord Glasnamara was making his comments on the letter.

Some minutes had passed before he was able to gather that the letter was from Barry, and that it announced that he and Major Grafton hoped to arrive at the Castle the following afternoon.

"It will interest you to know that Barry has agreed to the petition presented to him by the influential deputation—I never knew a deputation that *wasn't* influential—which waited on him asking him to contest the southern division of Brackenshire in the Conservative interest at the forthcoming bye-election," said Lord Glasnamara to Mr. Mott. "Here's his letter. It is very amusing; he announced himself to the deputation as an Independent Conservative. Could anything be funnier? An Independent Conservative! An Independent Conservative is a man who announces himself open to an offer from either party. Can you give us a better definition of it, Rosamund?"

"Oh, I would only venture to say that a man who

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has just got rid of his socialism calls himself an Independent Conservative," said Rosamund.

"An Independent Conservative is a man who is independent of Conservatism," continued Lord Glasnamara.

"Perhaps so; but if South Brackenshire is content to accept his description of himself, I don't think that it is for us to prove its absurdity," remarked Lady Glasnamara.

And then dinner was announced, and his lordship, giving his arm to Coralie, said quite merrily:

"An Independent Conservative, Coralie, is the man who announces the dinners which other people eat."

CHAPTER XLIII

The news that Barry was to arrive the next day had impressed every one, Mr. Mott perceived. He was coming—that was all they cared about; no one cared the toss of a penny about his political professions. No one cared the toss of a halfpenny whether he called himself an Independent Conservative or a Little Englander—no one except his father, who knew that a declaration of independence meant with a sensible man—that is, with a man determined to get on in the world—a determination to keep an eye upon the jumping cat. The jumping cat Lord Glasnamara knew to be the most important factor in modern politics.

He referred once or twice during dinner to the necessity for Barry's interesting himself in this particular class of *felina*, but no one responded; every one simply said, in effect: "He is coming," and at last Lord Glasnamara was forced to take cognisance of the bare fact that Barry would be dining at the Castle the following evening.

"I didn't expect him for another fortnight at least," said he. "I heard, of course, about his candidature business; but I thought that he had that Barkstone matter to investigate. By the way, Mr. Mott, you will probably have heard something about it—that letter which was written from headquarters to dis-

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credit his mission—I suppose it was a mission—a soft of mission—to the Barkstone Brotherhood?"

There was a pause of some duration before Mr. Mott said:

"It was a forgery, my lord."

"A *borderceau*," said Bertie, promptly; and Rosamund recollected that she had said that very word with equal promptitude the day Barry had unexpectedly returned and told at the luncheon table the story of the letter pronounced by Mr. Mott to be a forgery.

"If it was a forgery, Barry will certainly have proved it to be so," said Lord Glasnamara.

"It was a disgraceful thing," said Mr. Mott. "I am afraid that it was concocted in order to throw discredit upon me."

"Is it possible that there are persons in the brotherhood who are capable of so nefarious a transaction?" asked his lordship.

Mr. Mott smiled the smile of a man who knows men and is therefore grieved—grieved but tolerant, tolerant but not amazed.

"It is not the offence against myself that annoys me," said he. "It is the attempt to discredit my friend. It was a dastardly attempt to stab my friend in the back, and I hold that the man who would be guilty of such an act of treachery is worse than a bandit. To stab one in the back—that is bad enough; but a forgery—a poisoned poniard!"

"True—true; your indignation does you much credit, Mr. Mott," said his host. "And what have you done in the matter, Mr. Mott?"

"What was left me to do, my lord?" cried Mr.

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Mott. "I say nothing about honour; honour is an unknown quantity."

"Sometimes," suggested Bertie.

"But I know what truth and justice and brotherhood demanded of me," continued Mr. Mott, "and that was why I threatened to resign my place on the council unless the forger of that letter was expelled. The matter is not yet decided, but the issue is of the simplest character. I have left the Executive to choose between the perpetrator of that document and myself," said Mr. Mott.

"Then there is some chance of you also becoming an Independent Conservative," said Lord Glasnamara. The phrase seemed to give a huge delight to him. The qualification of the Conservatism which his son had embraced was especially amusing to him.

"My principles are fixed, my lord," said Bernard, with an air of penultimate finality. "Brotherhood! There are no shades of brotherhood."

"Oh, yes; there are half-brothers," said Rosamund.

"My principles are fixed once and for all. They are my own," said Mr. Mott; and now his tone meant finality itself without compromise.

"Ah, you have protected them—not provisionally. Independent Conservatism suggests a provisional patent. It has a *nisi prius* sound, hasn't it?" said Lord Glasnamara, gaily. "Perhaps, all things considered, it might be as well to say that an Independent Conservative is a man who was a Radical yesterday and may be a socialist to-morrow."

Lady Glasnamara, who feared that finality might not be reached in these essays at defining something

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that was essentially indefinite, rose and made a move to the door. She was beginning to weary of conversation that suggested the lapidary and his wheel. Dust—diamond dust, yes; but diamond dust is worthless except for trade purposes, and her husband was a politician by profession. •

• Bertie did not resume his seat at the table after his mother and her train had left the dining-hall, and his father had offered cigars to Bernard Mott. He went to a window and stared into the darkness of the early night. He had an idea that, on the whole, Bernard Mott had been given an opportunity of strengthening his position through the indiscretion of Lord Glasnamara in referring to some letter or other—he, Bertie, knew nothing about what letter it was; only he was an observant person, and he had not failed to notice that after Mr. Mott's little outburst of eloquence—it was, he knew, eloquence, and that was why he termed it, in his own mind, exceeding rot—Coralie's eyes had shown signs of sparkling; nor did the fact escape him that for the rest of the time she remained at the table there was a look of unchastened pride on her face.

She was beginning once more to be proud of Bernard Mott, in spite of all that he, Bertie, had done to chasten her pride in this Mr. Mott.

And it had all been due to the indiscretion of his father in introducing the topic of that letter—whatever letter it was—thereby giving the fellow a chance of scoring. •

He had once overheard a vice-admiral remark that the Jameson raid had postponed the civilising of Johannesburg for ten years. Bertie now felt that this historical indiscretion had found a parallel in private

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life; Lord Glasnamara's indiscretion in introducing the topic of the letter had postponed for some time, at any rate, the throwing over of Bernard Mott by Coralie Randal.

And there was Lord Glasnamara leaning back in his chair, looking attentively at the ignited end of his cigar while he chatted away on terms of equality with Bernard Mott.

But any one could see from the way Bernard Mott smoked his cigar that he was a complete bounder.

When the bounder had ceased to demonstrate through the agency of his cigar the order to which he belonged, Bertie adopted an extreme measure in order to show that he washed his hands of Coralie and her affairs. He hunted out his old banjo—he had not been allowed to carry it to sea with him—and began tuning it, to a running accompaniment of maledictions in the Irish tongue by Cormac MacCormac, the hereditary bard, in a dark corner of the hall. For the next hour or two the hiccoughing of the banjo sounded in that dark corner, and was heard even in the more adjacent of the drawing-rooms.

He felt that he was having his revenge.

The windows of the farthest of the drawing-rooms opened upon a wide terrace, upon which the easiest of chairs supported the softest of cushions. Lord Glasnamara had drunk his coffee here, by the side of Coralie, Mr. Mott afterwards occupying another chair and listening with the merest affectation of interest to the legend of the mountain—Carrig-na-Pogue (Rock of the Kiss) was its name—over which the young moon was setting. A curlew was crying as it flew from the lough to the mountains, and now and again

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the booming of the swell from the deepest of the caves of Ross-na-Murchan filled the air. Before the lowest horn of the crescent moon had touched the black rim of the mount Lord Glasnamara had left the terrace. He had to write out a telegram to be despatched by the early car in the morning, he said; and the validity of the excuse was acknowledged by Mr. Mott, who thus suddenly found himself alone with Coralie.

Such moments as these had not been so numerous lately as he could have wished. ("She has not been sufficiently dosed with Mott *neat*," said Lord Glasnamara, with a look of immense significance, as he threw himself into an arm-chair.)

"I was so pleased with the way you spoke of that—letter business," she said. "It is at such times, when you speak denouncing something that other men might be afraid to denounce, I feel how much greater you are than other men."

She did not speak in the low, earnest way of the Girl who loves. She spoke as the Conversing Woman.

"I am glad that you are not disappointed. I am sorry to say that I am," was his reply to her confidence.

"Disappointed—in me?" she asked, eagerly, as though she actually looked forward to hearing that she had disappointed him.

There was a pause. He looked at her. The edge of the mountain cut through half the crescent of the moon. The light in the small drawing-room at their backs touched one side of her face and neck, and as she turned her head the single diamond that she wore

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in the centre of a piece of gold in the hollow of her throat blazed for a second. He saw it blaze.

"I am disappointed in Barry," he said.

"Because you think that he has changed?" she asked.

"Unstable as water—unstable as water," he murmured, shaking his head. Really his acquaintance with the Old Testament was inexhaustible.

"I don't think that it matters much what one calls one's self. Does it?" she said.

"Conservative," said he, ignoring the exact terms of her question. "Conservative. The enemy to progress. The man who is an enemy to progress is an enemy to mankind. A Conservative is the man who calls out 'Mark time,' when mankind looks for the order to march—forward—forward—forward."

"Oh, we had a lot of definitions to-night," said she.

"The worst of it is that his fall will reflect upon me," said he.

"His—fall—you?" There was a note of interrogation after her utterance of each word.

"That is the serious part of the matter. These waverers—time-servers—unstable—what you will—they are egoists. They think only of themselves and the passing moment. They do not think of the one who raised them from the regions of fashion and placed them in the region of thought. Oh, they are small—ungrateful—contemptible. They disappoint me."

"If you fancy that Barry Joyce is contemptible—that he is capable of doing any contemptible act—you—you make a great mistake. I thought that he was an ordinary man before I came here. I know better now. I once thought Major Grafton something

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less than an ordinary man, and the next day all the world was ringing with his name. I was a fool. As for Barry Joyce, I have seen something of his work in this place. "Self-sacrifice—self-effacement for the sake of the poor people here. Do not say that any act of his could be other than noble." •

• She had spoken with some fervour—almost with some passion, certainly with some feeling. •

He did not make any attempt to answer her. He was startled. Several moments passed before he remembered that he was a man with a mission. He had never known the rôle of the man with the mission to fail with a woman. He had hurled the part at her, so to speak, more than once before, and she had gone down before its impact, as it were.

He sprang to his feet and stood between her and the mountain, with the cold stars above it and the faint feeling of the burial of a young moon on the sky over the black ridge. He shut out all that enchantment from her.

He knew his rivals.

"You are mine," he said in a low voice. "I have plucked you from the danger that was ready to overwhelm you. I set your feet in a safe place. I set you among the thinkers of the world. But I find you ready to listen to the old voices that call you away from your duty. If you listen, you are lost—lost to all that is great and good—lost to the labour to which you are called—the work which you were sent to do—for the healing of the nations. My hand is on yours still"—and so it was. "If I take it away, you are lost. Your soul is lost. You will be among those who have looked back and are lost. Shall I take

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my hand away? Say but one word and I take it away."

"No—no," she cried. "Do not leave me. You have told me before what I was born to do in the world. I am helpless without you to teach me. I am confused when I try to think of all that I have to do. And I must do it all."

"You must do it all. It is laid on me to guide you. It is laid on you to follow me. You understand that?"

"I think I understand it. There is nothing better in the world than working for the good of the world."

"No, there is nothing better. And there is no one stronger than I am. There is no one whom you can trust save only I—I—Bernard Mott. You think that the people in this house are your best friends. You disappointed me to-day when you openly took their part in opposition to me—that woman who gibes at me and my mission to the world—my mission—*your* mission; they are not two, but one only. And the boy—the boy who insults me—you sided with him. You have been sent into the world to heal the world by peace; you openly proclaimed yourself on the side of the brute force which has made the world the noisome place that it is to-day. And you went away with a flaunt and a laugh, and without turning your head towards where I was sitting. Shall I take away my hand from yours, and allow you to go headlong down that steep—down—down—till the waters close over your head and you are lost forever?"

She grasped the hand which he had laid upon hers and held it as though she were already in a turbulent

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sea, and dependent for her life upon her retaining her hold upon that hand.

"Do not leave me to struggle alone," she gasped; and there was a child's moan in her utterance of the last word—a child's moan for pity. "Do not leave me. Be near me now—always."

"I will pity you—I will save you," he said. "There is no one you can trust except myself. You know it."

"I know it," she assented in a weak voice.

He took his hand away from hers. She gave a little cry. He laid his hand gently on hers again.

"Good gracious! are you still on the terrace?" came the voice of Rosamund from the window that opened behind them. "You have been imprudent, Coralie. What, you don't yet know what an Irish chill means? Do come indoors before it is too late. Heavens! you are as white as a banshee. I do hope you haven't caught a chill?"

"It really is not a cold night," said Mr. Mott. "Still—oh, we had a good deal to talk about."

"I don't doubt it," said Rosamund.

"I feel curiously tired; I think I'll go to bed at once," said Coralie. "Good-night."

"Good-night," said Mr. Mott. "What a lovely breath of air! Ah, yes! the pines. Good-night."

CHAPTER XLIV

Lord Glasnamara noticed that Coralie was looking tired when she came downstairs the next morning. Rosamund said that she had been doing too much lately, especially as regards sitting in the open air after dinner. Coralie said that there was nothing the matter with her, only she had received a letter from her father just before coming down.

"That's not a malady to be found in the pharmacopœia," said Lord Glasnamara. "What does he say to you to make you look fagged?"

"He does not say much," replied Coralie. "Only—I do not think I should be here. I should be by his side. I think he is worried about business."

"How encouraging to paupers like us," cried his lordship. "It really helps to brighten up our lives to know that millionaires have their business worries."

"It's possible to suffer from a plethora as well as from anæmia," said Rosamund.

"He says that the past week has brought about a good many changes of fortune, and he has had his losses. He hopes, however, to recover himself before the end of the month. He is worried, I know; that is why he only writes a short letter," said Coralie. "I think I should be with him."

"Psha! don't let your thoughts run in that direction," said Lord Glasnamara. "You would only add

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go his worries. Even if he were to lose what would be a large fortune for this side, he would still be a millionaire. I know that last week was a bit mosquitoish on the Street."

"The Street — what street? I like the word 'mosquitoish'—but what's the street?" said Rosamund.

"My dear, there's only one Street in the States—Wall Street," replied her father. "Yes, I read that there was a ground swell on in the Street last week. Stocks were like a cork on the Atlantic. You needn't think that your father will be worried about half a million or so. The fact that the thought worries you shows pretty clearly that you need a tonic. What would you say to a sail out to Ross-na-Murchan?"

She raised her head with an exclamation of pleasure; and then Rosamund saw that she caught the eye of Bernard; Bertie saw it, too.

"I don't think that I should care to go to-day," she said, in rather a feeble tone.

"That's rather an anæmic excuse, isn't it?" said Rosamund.

"Mr. Mott could have made a better one; it was he who sent it across to her on the Marconi system," said Bertie, with his face wrinkled up into a frown.

"I think—we think, Coralie and I, that the sea air is too strong for her" said Bernard Mott, blandly. "Some medical men affirm—"

But if some medical men only affirm, some naval men have no conscientious objection to an oath, and Bertie, as he jumped up from the table, found that he was no exception. He was out of the room before his father could reprove him.

"Where can he have picked up such words?" said

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the father. "From the time he left the *Britannia* he has always been aboard a man-of-war. I can't understand where he can have picked up those words, with which I beg leave most cordially to associate myself. Come along, Coralie, we'll have to get a salmon for those new guests of ours; Algy and Barry will be here presently shouting for salmon."

"I don't think—" began Coralie.

"Don't you, indeed? Oh, yes, you do," cried her host. "You think, and Mr. Mott thinks, and I think. Now, we'll see who is the strongest thinker among us. Look at me. I'm master here, am I not? Come along, Mr. Mott; if you promise to lie in perfect tranquillity on the river-bank, I promise you that you'll see a salmon landed between us. The sight will do you more good than an exhaustive acquaintance with what medical men affirm."

"I think we might prevail upon Coralie," said Mr. Mott, gently.

"Coralie is coming, whoever may stay at home," said Lord Glasnamara, stalking out of the room. He certainly was the master of the house.

Coralie looked surprised and puzzled.

"Come along, Coralie," said Rosamund. "You remember what Reynolds didn't say about Gainsborough? 'We are all going to Heaven, and Gainsborough is of the company.' We are all going to that salmon, and I'm of the company. Come along."

Coralie came.

Rosamund had made up her mind that she would never allow Coralie and Bernard to be alone together so long as they remained at the Castle. She was ready to believe anything that was bad about Mr.

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Mott, and she was certain that he had bullied Coralie the previous evening.

• So they all drove away together to the Falls, and as Coralie, in a moment of excitement, when she had hooked a six-pound fish, jumped into a pool between two crags the depth of which coincided exactly with the distance between the leather of her boots and the leather of her belt—she measured it—and succeeded in manœuvring her fish within reach of the gaff of the delighted Larry O' Lanigan, who shouted out the old war-cry of the Randals, "Randail a Boo! Randila go Bragh!" And, moreover, as this was the only salmon worth talking about that was caught, the whole party returned in high spirits.

Only, unfortunately, Bernard Mott had three minutes alone in the hall with Coralie before the arrival of Barry and Algy.

It was witnessing the result of this three minutes on the spirits of Coralie that caused Algy to ask Rosamund after dinner that night:

"Does he beat her?"

"Not with sticks, ' said Rosamund.

"The end of a fishing-rod would do in an emergency."

"I believe that he does worse—he bullies her when he gets her alone. She was getting on so nicely—getting to detest him so thoroughly—when last night the pater left them together on the terrace. Later on I found her sitting in a chair quite dazed. He was standing in front of her, with one hand touching hers. He had been speaking to her as if he were making a speech—quite as artificially."

"Good heavens! He makes speeches to her?"

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What brutality! And though she fell into the river to-day, she was not in boisterous high spirits?"

"We tried to make her the heroine of the day, didn't we? But she must have had five minutes with that man after we returned. Why should the pater have insisted on bringing him? We all thought the pater so clever."

"And I still believe him to be so. Wait, my dearest. Your sire would be a great strategist if he had not made up his mind to be a great statesman. He really restrained himself wonderfully in commenting upon the Independent Conservative phrase."

"Oh, you should have heard him about it yesterday. There was not much restraint in his comments then. But about Coralie?"

"I think Barry takes the same view as you do about Mott's being here. When he heard that he had come here he was far from pleased. I overheard him call Mott a rascal a couple of days ago when he thought he was alone."

"I'm so glad. That was why he was so polite to Mott at dinner?"

"I daresay. When you have assurance that a man is a rascal you cannot but be polite to him. As a matter of fact it is only to a rascal that one is ever polite nowadays. That cuts them to the quick."

Then they went on to talk of other matters.

But Rosamund never forgot that she had heard that her brother had called the man who had recently been his friend—or at least his political associate; the two are not invariably found in combination—a rascal; if he had been the greatest rascal in the polit-

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ical world Barry could not have been politer to him than he was when they met before dinner.

She did not forget this; but lest it might escape her memory at a later hour of the night, she managed to lure her brother into the small drawing-room overlooking the terrace, and then on to the terrace itself. He seated himself in one of the chairs, and she sat in the next to his and leant over his arm. The night was darker than the previous one had been. The summit of Carrig-na-Pogue was lost in the clouds.

"It is nice to have you with us again, dear," she said. "I only wish you had come sooner. You called Bernard Mott a rascal. Why?"

He did not laugh at the apparent want of sequence in her remarks. He only said, in a low voice:

"Why does any one call a man a rascal, except because he is a rascal?"

"Why, indeed? And you found out—at last—that he is a rascal?"

"Well, yes; a sort of rascal."

"Oh, only a sort?"

There was a tone of disappointment in her voice.

"Well, of course, there are degrees. Still—"

"Yes; there are degrees of murder in France, are there not? I don't believe that Mr. Mott is capable of rising to any act of heroic criminality. What did he do?"

"He may have thought it fair enough. Some people think that in love—"

• "Oh, don't make use of that word in connection with that man. Love!" •

"Well, I'll try not to exculpate him. You may recollect that I said that I'd find out all about that letter which was sent after me to Barkstone."

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“I remember it very well. We all do—Mr. Mott does so, too.”

“I’m glad of that. Well, you remember that the letter was written by the London Executive—the Central Committee, they call themselves—to the man with whom I came to loggerheads at Barkstone, and it said that I was not to be taken seriously—that my mission was to be regarded as a farce. That letter was, Mott said, a forgery.”

“He says so now; the pater, curiously enough, brought forward the matter yesterday. Mott said that he had given the Central Committee option of accepting his resignation or the resignation of the man who had shown you the forged letter.”

“The letter was not a forgery. I went as deep as I could go in probing the matter. These socialist leaders—they are all leaders—are all ready to turn Queen’s evidence, the one against the other. Just now, however, they seem to have all combined against Leader Mott. The man at Barkstone laughed at the idea of the letter being a forgery. He referred me to the Executive. I saw one of the heads of the Central Executive—there is no officer among them who does not claim to be the head—and he said that the letter was a forgery, the signature at the foot which purported to be his was not his. The next day he received from my solicitor a polite inquiry as to the person who would accept service of the writ in an action for libel which I was about to bring against him, the libel being contained in that letter. The man wrote to me begging of me to allow him to visit me the next day.”

“And you allowed him?”

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"Certainly. And the result was that he made a clean breast of it, as they say in the law. He had written the letter at the instigation of Mott, he said; and he produced the minutes of a conversation between him and Mott on the subject of my mission. The conversation had been taken down by a shorthand writer concealed behind the screen. That's how the brotherhood do business."

"And the conversation?"

"The conversation—I can hardly repeat it. It is too humiliating."

"Then will you let me suggest to you what it amounted to? This Mr. Mott got the Central Executive to adopt his plan for packing you off in order that he might have a fair field with the American heiress whom he hoped to marry."

"How have you heard? How could you possibly—?"

"Psha! I am a woman. I saw Mott—I saw Coralie—I saw you."

"You are a bit of a wonder, Rosamund."

"I'm a bit of a woman. A bit of a woman is a bit of a wonder—especially to a man. And Bernard Mott is in the next room. And he's the successful man. I thought that we had brought her to her senses when Bertie and I had her alone with us; she had come to detest the very name of Mott and to love the very name of Ireland. But the pater would have Mott here, and last night he said something to her on this very terrace that brought her back to him closer than ever. What are we to do? You cannot well pitch him into the lough. That would make a martyr of him, and Coralie is on the side of the martyrs."

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“I have been thinking over the whole business for the past week, but I cannot see my way out of it.”

“You can make no move in the matter. A girl will forgive her lover for being a rascal, but she never forgives the man who proves him to be a rascal!—a rascal! and such a rascal! But she must find him out for herself. Let us return to the other room.” •

• They returned to the other room.

CHAPTER XLV

And Barry was more polite than ever to Bernard Mott. His politeness was chilling.

At Algy tried some experiments at being polite also, but like an amateur unaccustomed to playing a part, he greatly overdid it. He overlaid it with ornament to such an extent that the fundamental structure was wholly concealed.

He never addressed him except as "Dear Mr. Mott," so that Mr. Mott was greatly galled.

Once he said, "Yes, sir," in reply to an inquiry of Mr. Mott's.

He always took off his hat when he found himself in the presence of Mr. Mott, and he took it off with an air of affable humility.

He said "H'sh!" to every one at the table when Mr. Mott was about to say something.

In fact he was grossly polite to Mr. Mott, in season and out of season.

But when he saw how Rosamund behaved in regard to Coralie he ceased his fooling. There was no acting of a part in the way he kissed her in the garden, in full view of the everlasting mountains, in the exquisite twilight made by the setting of the sun behind the ridge of Carrig-na-Pogue, an hour before it dropped into the Atlantic.

"I never loved you until now, my sweetheart," he said while he held her in his arms.

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"Yes—yes—but why—why?" she gasped.

"Because, though you were perishing for this—this—you kept by the side of that girl when you saw the rascal hovering near her. Your neglect of me has shown me what a good woman you are. The rascal hypnotises her. Have you not seen it? She is afraid of him. I have known cases of it before now. It can be done with the voice as well as with the eyes."

"Heavens! You think that it is real hypnotism!" she said. "If it were—that was why he was talking to her on the terrace in his speech-making voice."

"Take my word for it, that's the secret of his influence over her. He's a born orator—every one says that. And you know that every born orator is a born hypnotiser. People say, 'What a fine sermon it is!' 'What an eloquent address to the jury it is!' but they can't tell you a single sentence that either sermon or address contains. The rascal Mott is an ignorant chap, but so have the most oratorical of preachers been—the most successful demagogues. Education is not necessary. It may be a drawback. I don't say that it is. Lift up your little finger and I'll pitch him out on his head."

"I'm very sorry to say that that would be impossible," said Rosamund.

"What a pity! Sacred hospitality and so forth, I suppose. Never mind. You are standing between them. Continue to neglect me, and I'll worship you."

And all this time Lord Glasnamara was gracious and gay in the presence of Mr. Mott.

His son Bertie was not.

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An epic gloom had settled down upon Bertie. He had gone out alone before breakfast, and during that meal he exchanged no word with any one. He avoided Barry and looked wistfully at Rosamund. He went off after breakfast, and about lunch-time there came a rumour that he had been seen sitting lonely and alone on a rock half-way up the slope of the mighty Slieve Gorm. He was clearly in the hands of his gloom.

He was greatly respected in the servants' hall.

But he returned to the Castle for tea.

His father lectured him, making an appeal to his better nature. Did he really now, speaking as man to man, mean to say that he had been treating Coralie well? Had he forgotten that Coralie was a guest at the Castle, and was he aware that she had not been for a walk on the mountain-side for several days past? What was he afraid of? Was it possible that he was afraid of Mr. Mott?

The naval man gave a scornful laugh. Then he strode in from the garden, where his father had been lecturing him, to the hall, where there was the tea party. He strode up to Coralie, standing in front of Mr. Mott, with his feet wide apart, as if the floor of the hall was given to undulation and required a firm foot to be set upon it.

"Come along up the hill, Cora, and I'll show you where Timmy O'Rourke drowned himself," said he, boldly.

"There's a tempting offer for you, Miss Randal," said Algy.

"I'll go," said Coralie, quickly; and she rose, looking towards the door.

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• "Of course you will. I'd like to see who'd prevent you," said Bertie, stoutly.

There was a pause. He felt it somewhat disappointing that no one took up his challenge. He would have liked it if Mr. Mott had made the attempt to prevent him from walking off with Coralie. It would have been a sharp and fiery struggle in that ancient hall—a struggle worthy of the best traditions of the neighbourhood; but he did not doubt for an instant what the issue of the combat would be. He would have stretched Mr. Mott out on the oak boards, and then, adjusting his cuffs, he would have walked off with Coralie.

His Hamlet gloom settled down on him once more, and even the exhilaration incidental to a stiff climb up a part of the mountain-range where Coralie had not yet been failed to dispel the clouds that hung upon him. He had not yet spoken a word to his companion. It was not until they stood together on the highest ridge and felt the sea-breeze on their faces that he said:

"Oh, Cora—oh, Cora!"

"My poor boy!" she said, sympathetically; "what is it that has gone wrong with you? I noticed two days ago that you were not my dear Bertie at all, but somebody quite different. You did not come to see me jump into the water yesterday when it looked as if the fish was going to escape. And to-day you seem to have something weighing heavily on you."

"Oh!" he groaned. "You see that tarn in the other valley? That's where Timmy O'Rourke drowned himself."

"Why should he have gone out of his way to do it

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there?" she asked. "Wasn't there enough water in Lough Omeragh to serve his purpose? I should like to be drowned in a good broad place myself. Perhaps it was a point of sentiment with poor Timmy."

"I have been thinking all day that I should be doing well to follow his example," said he.

"You! How can you talk such nonsense?" she cried.

"Cora, tell me the truth; don't you feel miserable?" he asked, suddenly.

"I—I? Oh, I feel all right," she said, with a brave effort at gaiety. "That is—I mean—oh, Bertie! I never felt so wretched in all my life."

She threw herself down on the heather and wept, with her face in her hands.

He did not know very much about girls and their ways, but he knew enough to prevent him from interrupting her paroxysm of tears. He stood looking out to sea, his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his jacket.

Before he was aware that she had risen he felt her hand upon his arm.

"I don't think that I am a lively sort of chum for you, Bertie, old boy," said she, smiling as the sun was smiling through the rainy haze that had slipped over the brow of the western headlands.

"You're the best girl alive," he cried, and he, too, imitated the dim shine in the west. "You are the best girl, if only—if—I wonder if you think that God would insist on my doing a mean thing?"

"You would be the last one in the world to do a mean thing," said she, wondering.

"Yes; I know; by myself I wouldn't, would I now?"

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“I don't suppose—”

The subtle problem in comparative theology puzzled her. She did not finish the sentence.

“It's not an easy one, is it?” said he, sympathetically.

“Tell me why you ask me all this, Bertie?” said she.

“Sit down, then,” said he; and she seated herself on a crag, and waited.

He was not fluent. He did not know how to begin his story. He frowned as some openings suggested themselves to him.

“I may as well be straight to you, Cora,” he said at last. “I—I don't like Mr. Mott. I hope I've no prejudices; but I don't like him. In fact, I may say that I—no, I don't think it would be good taste to say it. Anyhow, I suspected that he said something to you on the terrace the night before last out of spite for the way you showed him that you wouldn't be bullied by him. Well, it was a mean thing to do, but I went out on the terrace last night and hid myself in a corner. I thought he might be bringing you out again, and if he would bully you, I'd knock the head off him once and for all, and have done with it.”

“Oh, Bertie! I had no idea—but we didn't go out to the terrace.”

“No; but somebody else did. Rosie and Barry came out, and didn't see me. There I was; I couldn't stir, and I had to hear all they said. I'll tell you what I heard.”

“Oh, no; you needn't do that, Bertie. That would be where the meanness would come in.”

“If I didn't tell you, then I should know that I

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wasn't sent there by Providence after all—that I was just mean on my own account. Cora, Barry has been working out that business of the letter for all it was worth."

"The letter?"

"Yes, the letter which the chap at Barkstone got from the other chap in London saying that Barry was a kind of soft roe."

"Oh, that letter. But the man forged it."

"Not much. Barry found all that out. The letter was a real one, dictated by Mott."

"Oh, don't tell me—"

"You must hear it all, and then I'll know that I was placed there by Providence, and that I had no hand in it myself. I tell you that Barry saw the London chap, and he tried on a game of bluff. Fancy a game of bluff succeeding with old B.! It didn't succeed much; Barry sent him a writ for libel, to give him a chance of swearing all he knew about the letter; and then the chap called on Barry, and told him that the letter was a real one and not forged, and he showed him the report, taken in shorthand by a chap behind a screen, of what Mott had confessed to the other chap—that he wanted Barry packed off to some place at a distance, because he knew that Barry was in love with you, and—I say, Cora, you're never going to go off into a faint. Oh, no! you're not that sort of a girl."

"Bertie—Bertie—that's—that's not true—oh, it cannot be true!" cried Coralie, and there was a piteous note in her voice. She had sprung to her feet and was eagerly looking into his face.

"Every word that I have told you is true," said

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Bertie. "Barry found it all out—he found Mott out. Mott saw that Barry was in love with you, and he got him packed off."

"But he—your brother—he was not—oh, Bertie, you have not heard—"

"What? Don't you know that Barry—oh, ask him if he isn't—if he isn't—well, I suppose you could hardly do that, but take my word for it; ask Rosie, if you wish. Maybe you'll believe her. She has ears—and eyes. There would be nothing indelicate in asking Rosie if it isn't true that Barry was—is—in love with you. Why, I took it for granted that you knew it—that he had said to you that he—"

"He said no word. He made no sign." The piteous note in her voice had become dominant. "I thought—ah, I recollect it was Bernard Mott who told me—that there was a scheme—but then your brother went away—"

"He was packed off by Mott. But take my word for it, he fell in love with you the first moment he saw you. How could he help it?"

"And I asked his advice when Bernard Mott asked me to marry him, and yet he didn't say that he—he himself—"

"How the mischief could he say that he loved you when you were asking him for his unprejudiced advice about marrying another man? Ah, you never got within reach of understanding Barry."

"No—no. I have never understood. I fancied when I heard Bernard Mott speak that he was the only earnest—the only true man—"

"I never knew much good of chaps that were fond of making speeches. Show me a sea-lawyer, and I'll

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show you a regular skulker. It's the same with the speech-making ashore."

"And I have promised to marry him. He will make me marry him."

"Will he? By George! Let him try it—that's all."

CHAPTER XLVI

They had begun the descent of the mountain in silence, and they had reached the level track before Coralie spoke. She stopped suddenly and cried:

"Oh, Bertie, Bertie! what was it that came over me? How could I ever have allowed myself to be carried away? Oh, I must have been blind—blind!"

"Yes; I believe you must have been. It would have been better if you had been deaf—stone deaf," said Bertie. "Then you couldn't have heard a word of that stuff that he spouted. Let this be a warning to you, Cora; never so long as you live have anything to say to a chap who makes speeches. He's usually a scoundrel, or what's worse, a bounder. I wonder what he said to you on the terrace the night before last? I felt that it was mean of me to go there last night on the chance of his bringing you there again. But you see, I was so sure—but what did he say to you?"

A puzzled look came to Coralie's face.

"I don't know what he spoke about," she said, slowly. "I seem to have only the recollection of a dream of what he said to me. I went on the terrace determined not to allow myself to be persuaded into thinking anything bad about you or any one here—not even about myself; I knew, of course, that he would be angry with me for what I said about you.

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But somehow, before he had been talking to me for five minutes, he had persuaded me. I felt just as he felt. I am afraid of him, Bertie. And I know that he will keep me to my promise."

"Will he? Let him try it," said Bertie. Then a sudden thought seemed to strike him. "Look here, Cora," he said; "if he tries to keep you to your promise, you can tell him that you made a sacred promise to me, too. Didn't you agree not to marry him for a year and a day? Just you refer him to me. I know how to deal with a chap like him. I'll knock the head off him. I'll fill him so full of lead that no slot-weighing machine has a dial that would register him. A year—oh, he'll probably be hanged before the end of a year."

"Oh, why, why was he asked here? Weren't we all happy and pleasant until he came? Why did he come?"

"Oh, the pater has his notions. I know he had a notion about you and Mott. I heard him chuckling over a phrase that he had made up—the people who make phrases sometimes do chuckle over them, you know. 'Dose her with Mott—dose her with Mott,' I heard him say to the mater. Well, it's all right; you have had a dose of him, haven't you?"

"Ah! But I shall have to marry him. Let us hasten down. Perhaps something may happen. Oh, Bertie, look at that sea out there."

"It's a bit rough, isn't it? It's always that way when the tide is running into the lough and the wind is from the nor'east. If you get caught in the cross-current off Ross-na-Murchan, you may look out for things. I say, isn't the wind freshening? But don't

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you think that we'll stand by and see you marry him. That's not our way. That's not the way with the Joyces."

"Is it not?" said Coralie. "What is the way with the Joyces? I never understood the way with the Joyces. I don't think I know much better now than I did when I came to England first. I thought you all—Rosamund, Major Grafton, every one—so frivolous, so insincere, with no object in life but to amuse yourselves. They talked seriously only about horses."

"Ah, you hadn't fallen in with the yachting crowd."

"Horses. Even your brother talked about ponies as if there was nothing in the world but ponies. And Major Grafton—I thought him nothing more than an ordinary cavalry officer. And that day at the House of Commons—Sir Ecroyde—a Cabinet Minister—he talked of compromise—I was a stranger in a strange land. I have come to know you all better now. But even now—why should your father and mother congratulate me when I told them I had promised to marry—that man? Why should Lord Glasnamara write a letter to my father in the States, telling him that—that man—was the right person for me to marry?"

"He never did that."

"He must have done so; for the letter which I got from my father sanctioning my promise made to Bernard Mott told me that Lord Glasnamara had written to him telling him all about Mr. Mott. Can you explain that?"

Bertie stuffed his hands still deeper into his pockets.

"There's a bit of a sea on out there," he said,

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after a considerable pause. "Yes; I forgot that it's a spring tide."

"Can you explain what I have asked you?" she cried.

"You've given me a stiff 'un, Cora," said he, frankly.

"You all detest Bernard Mott, but only your brother and sister know how shabbily—how shockingly—he behaved in regard to your brother. You all detested him long ago. And yet you all congratulated me on being about to marry him."

"No; not all—don't say all of us, Cora."

"Your father did. Was he, too, deceived by Mr. Mott? Your mother—oh, he was asked to dinner—he was asked over here. Why did they not oppose my foolishness—my madness? Why did they encourage it, Bertie?"

"You've given me a stiff 'un. I wonder if you might take the pater's chuckle as an explanation: 'Dose her with Mott.' I've heard the pater laugh at people who opposed their daughters' engagements. He had another phrase for it; I forget what it was. It meant that the only way you can make sure of an imprudent match being carried out is by opposing it. I wonder now if the pater's notion was to try the opposite course with you. 'Dose her with Mott'—those were his words."

Coralie gazed at him. Then she gave a laugh.

"Oh, let us go on," she said. "Let us go on to the Castle."

"Of course, you won't give me away," said he, after they had gone on for some distance.

"Give you away?" said she.

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"You won't hint to Rosie or Barry that I was on the terrace, hidden in the corner? They mightn't take the Providence view of the matter, but fancy that I was mean on my own account. And then—well, I don't think I would say anything to Mott just now, either, if I were you. Better wait to see what Barry means to do. Barry has a head on him."

"Oh, you have all heads on you—that's the worst of it," said Coralie, and her voice sounded like a moan. "You have all better heads than I have. The only silly one of the household is myself, and I think that I have been silly enough for you all."

She gave another laugh—the sort of laugh that one gives when deriding one's self and there is none to hear the derision.

They went on down the slope, but before they had reached the junction of the mountain-track and the road leading through Glen Dhu the grey mist was swirling about them and a rain-squall was upon them in a moment. There was no place of shelter to which they might run, had they so desired. Both of them had, however, become so accustomed to sudden rain and wind in this region of fierce outbursts of storms that they never ran for shelter from the wildest squall. Coralie's dress was made to withstand even a sudden immersion in a salmon-pool—she had subjected it to this test the day before.

"I didn't see that coming on," said Bertie, "but I might have known that it was on its way to us. The sun looked sodden and the wind was from the east. You don't mind it, do you?"

"I like it," she said. "I feel like that. The rain and the wind are sympathetic. I want nothing better."

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"I think I like this weather, too," said he. "There's a bit of a swagger about the rain, isn't there? Did you ever hear the story of the boy that came aboard the flagship in the old days, and when the rain came on he went down below to his berth and returned with an umbrella? When the officer on watch asked him, in the way they used to talk at sea long ago, what he meant, he said that his ma had told him to mind to put up his umbrella when it came on to rain. The officer threw it over the side."

Coralie actually laughed at this story, and that encouraged him to tell her of the Admiralty order that was issued during the *régime* of a singularly economical First Lord. It was to the effect that in order to prevent undue waste of tar aboard the fleet, the captains were to instruct their crews that in future they were not to grasp the shrouds too tightly, for fear of squeezing the tar out of the ratlines when going aloft.

He had a few more stories coeval with these—grim survivals of the days when a ship was rigged with hemp and not with wire; when embarking on a voyage meant the beginning of a romance; when salt horse made the fore-castle odoriferous, and the lively weevil took charge of the cuddy.

Coralie had heard none of the stories, and she was kept laughing as she streamed through the rain that enveloped her quite as effectively as the water of the salmon-pool had enveloped her when she had sounded it on the previous day.

The darkness of the evening had fallen as they trudged up the drive from the damp depths of Glen Dhu, with the wind swaying the long, outstretched

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arms of the forest of firs, and every swaying arm swung a gallon of rain-water into the avenue.

The blaze of a fire that was alight in the great hall made them already cheerful as they passed through the porch, and shook all the loose rain off their garments before entering.

Rosamund was seated in front of the fire, and she sprang to her feet with a cry of:

"It was a false alarm, then, or you wouldn't be back so soon?"

"A false alarm?" said Coralie. "If any one spread the report that it's raining, there's no false alarm about that."

"Oh, it's only you. I thought it was the others who had returned," said Rosamund.

"What others?" said Bertie. "We saw nothing of any others. Where are the others?"

"What! you didn't meet the others—Barry—Algy—the others? They are gone more than an hour," said Rosamund.

"We met no one. Where are they gone?" asked Bertie.

"A message came that one of the fishing-boats had been caught in the cross currents off Ross-na-Murchan and had her mast carried away and was drifting out to sea. Barry and the rest went off to try what could be done."

"Oh, my usual luck!" groaned Bertie. "They're all gone off to the wreck of the boat—I'll swear that they are—and here am I hanging up to dry before the nursery fire for fear of catching cold. Oh, what luck! An hour ago, you say?"

"Fully an hour. It wasn't raining then."

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"They'll have their work cut out for them," said Bertie, with the air and bearing of a critic. "By George! they would be nothing the worse for an extra hand. If our boat manages to pick up the men from the lugger, they'll have a beat to windward that will need all the sailing they know."

"They'll come out of it all right," said Rosamund; but there was a good deal of uneasiness in her voice.

"Of course they'll come out of it. But there has been a squall or two. They'll have to sail the boat all they know. I wish I was with them. Oh, confound it all! My luck! Maybe it's not too late yet."

He gave his cap another squeeze over the fire and made for the door. But before he reached it the door opened and Bernard Mott, limp and dishevelled, stepped into the hall, and dropped into a chair.

CHAPTER XLVII

"Was he one of the party?" asked Bertie.

"My God! He cannot be the only one saved!" cried Rosamund, with uplifted hands.

She took a step or two towards the dejected sitting figure.

"You are here—where are the others?" she asked, in a low, suspicious voice.

"I am nearly dead," said Mr. Mott.

Coralie took a step or two forward until she was by the side of Rosamund. She craned her head towards him just as Rosamund had done.

"We don't want to hear anything about yourself, living or dead," said she. "We want to hear about the others. Where are the others?"

"Speak!" cried Rosamund. "However feeble you may be, you can still speak. Where are they?"

Lord Glasnamara appeared at the end of the hall. There was a minute's silence. The little drip of the rain from Coralie's sodden skirt was heard through the silence.

Bernard Mott stared from one girl to the other.

"We saw the disabled boat in the distance," said he at last. "It was Joyce who suggested that the yacht might be able to pick up the crew. The boatman backed him up. Then the rain came on, but still they got aboard the yacht. I saw them hoist one of the sails—the small, triangular sheet."

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"Sheet!" shouted Bertie. "He calls a sail a sheet! Go on. Where were you when you saw them hoist the—the sheet?"

"I was sheltering behind the cliff. Didn't I say that it was raining? Raining? The rain was coming down in sheets."

• "More sheets!" derided Bertie. "Well?"

"Well! There's nothing more to tell," said Mr. Mott. "I give you my word that I endeavoured to dissuade them from going. It was raining. I said it was foolhardy. They never answered me. I looked out from the side of the cliff. The yacht was tearing through the water. Then a frightful squall, with a perfect deluge—I never saw such rain! It darkened the air. I have heard of waterspouts. When it moderated I looked again. The yacht was not to be seen. I looked for it. The sea was boiling like a cauldron. No yacht was to be seen. I came here at once; I did not mind the rain. It was my duty."

"Coward!" cried Coralie, craning her head to the extent of another inch towards him. "You are a coward. You would not be here now if you were not a coward."

• "That is my reward," said Mr. Mott, reproachfully. • "I did not expect this from you, Coralie. You forget yourself."

"That's a fault you are never guilty of; you always think of yourself first. That's what makes a man a coward—thinking of himself and no one else," said Coralie. "You left the others to drown."

"Only they'll not be drowned," said Bertie.

• Lord Glasnamara came forward gently—with the footfall of a diplomatist. He thought that the baiting

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of Mr. Mott had gone on long enough. The scene was really one of the baiting of a man, and it was not without an element of vulgarity. But Lord Glasnamara felt that this element, being quite natural, was easily pardonable. He knew that his daughter was in a nervous condition, and he knew also that his own plans in regard to Bernard Mott were being worked out with terrible effect against Coralie. She had come to know Bernard Mott thoroughly, and remembering what she had once thought of him, her self-esteem had been deeply wounded. Only the consciousness that she had been made a fool of, and that it was she herself who had made a fool of herself, could cause her to take a foremost place in the baiting of Mr. Mott.

As for Bertie—well, he was simply insolent; but that was because he sympathised so deeply with Coralie's being made a fool of by herself. He could not be very angry with Bertie.

"My dear Coralie, you are only a girl, but you are as unjust as—well, as a woman," said Lord Glasnamara. "Mr. Mott has greatly dared—he is greatly wet—I commend his judgment and discretion—nay, his bravery."

Coralie laughed contemptuously.

Bertie laughed derisively.

His father turned upon him.

"Don't you think that you would be better employed upon the cliffs, trying to give them a hand with the boat when it returns, than in warming yourself by a comfortable fire?" said Lord Glasnamara.

Bertie's jaw fell. He gazed at his father, then at

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Mr. Mott. Then he made a rush for the door, and vanished in a whirl of wind and rain.

Then Coralie turned upon Lord Glasnamara.

"You spoke to him as if he was a coward," she cried, and her hands were clenched as she stood before him. He had the heart to kiss her. "Do you fancy that if he had been within reach of the boat when it was going out that any power on earth would have kept him out of her?"

"I wouldn't go so far, my dear; only—"

"There's no only in the case, Lord Glasnamara. Bertie is as brave as—as—"

She glanced towards Bernard Mott, and that glance, Lord Glasnamara was ready to admit, was the legitimate conclusion to her sentence. "As brave as that man is the contrary," was how Rosamund translated her glance.

"Pardon me, my dear," said his lordship, "but it's Bertie's trade to sail things; whereas Mr. Mott's profession is—"

"His profession is to talk," said Coralie. "His profession is to profess."

"It requires a great deal more courage to decline to join in a foolhardy adventure than to—"

"Oh, that's the reasoning of the man with brains, in order to excuse his cowardice," said she. "Brains! brains—thank heaven, we haven't yet come to the era where brains are allowed to supersede bravery."

• Rosamund caught her by the hand.

Lord Glasnamara made an eloquent gesture and turned to Bernard.

"Mr. Mott," he said, "when you are as old as I am you will estimate at their true value such scenes as

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these. You will acknowledge that young women—or for that matter old women—would be much less charming and much less interesting if they ceased to be the creatures of impulse that they are just now. Eve—believe me, Mr. Mott—the first woman, was a hieroglyphic inscription, and every other is a mere squeeze of the first. You are wet. Do you think it wise to sit there in those sodden garments?"

"I don't mind that, my lord," said Mr. Mott, luridly. "I don't mind trifles; but to be accused—"

"If you change your clothes and get a rub-down at once, you'll have forgotten everything about accusations to-morrow," said his lordship, blandly. "But if you don't change your garments, neither will your point of view be changed by to-morrow. In short, I hope you will allow me to insist—"

He playfully led the drooping and protesting figure to one of the doors that led to a stairway. The two girls stood apart and watched the departure of the two men. When the door was closed and the voice of the host was heard calling for lights, Coralie flung herself into Rosamund's arms, crying:

"Rosamund, Rosamund, what a fool I have been! I know now that I hate him—I loathe him. A coward! a coward! How could I pretend to myself that I loved a coward!"

"You don't love a coward," said Rosamund, firmly; the time for firmness had come, she perceived. "You don't love a coward; on the contrary, you love my brother Barry."

"I do—I do—I do! I have never loved any one else, though I only knew it a couple of hours ago.

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And now—is he lost? Are they all lost? Ah, my Rosamund, we shall be sisters—widows in grief.”

“If you don’t change your frock, you’ll be in a high fever to-morrow,” said Rosamund.

“Oh, don’t talk to me of changing,” cried Coralie. “He is changing his clothes. That is good enough for him. I will not do anything that he does. How can you remain so cool? Oh, you didn’t look out on the sea as we did. White—one mass of seething white! You think that it would be possible for the boat to live through it? And then the squall that fell with a shock. How can you remain so cool?”

“Cool? Cool? Ah, if you only knew how I feel at this moment,” said Rosamund. “Cool? Oh, every time you said that word—that terrible word—the most terrible that a man can be called—every time that you said it, I felt a stab. I felt that you were crying it out against me. Coralie, I know those men who are in that boat, and I know that if they do not succeed in saving the men whom they set out to save, they will never return to us. That is what makes me such a craven—the thought of their bravery, and yet—and yet—I would rather cherish the memory of a man who was brave unto death than be loved by a man who had saved himself when others were lost. Oh, they must return—they must!”

“They shall return,” cried Coralie. “Your confession has made me hopeful—almost brave.”

“Ah, I know how you feel,” said Rosamund. “You feel that it will not do for us both to be cowards.”

“No—no; it is not that, indeed,” cried Coralie. “No, it is that somehow—somehow I seem to have

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had a cloud just lifted from before my eyes. I seem to see everything clearly now, since—since—”

She paused; she could not give Bertie away by telling Rosamund that he had overheard the conversation between her and Barry on the terrace, and that he had communicated the result of that conversation to his companion on the mountain-side.

“Since?—yes, since you confessed—what you have just confessed. It is only by one’s own confession that the cloud which obscures our sight is banished.”

Coralie caught her by the hand and pressed it to her own bosom—an eloquent if unconventional act of acquiescence.

“He will return,” she whispered. Only a minute and a half had passed since she had confessed that she loved Barry, and already she was showing all the selfishness of the fully qualified lover by forgetting that there was any one else worth considering besides Barry. “He will return.”

“Yes; they must,” said Rosamund.

“Danger—of course; but what right has that coward to talk of the amount of danger? He knows nothing about it. He actually called the storm, try’s I a sheet. You heard him?”

“He is quite incapable of judging. If it had been Bertie—”

“Ah, Bertie would have been able to tell us all—only Bertie would have been aboard the boat himself—first—the very first to go aboard.”

“There’s no doubt about that.”

“But Lord Glasnamara can judge of the danger, and would he talk as he did if he thought that the boat was lost? That is what I have been asking myself.”

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She spoke with the confident air of one accustomed to draw serious inferences from the smallest occurrences.

"If I had not heard my father speak as he did, I should not have been nearly so much alarmed," said Rosamund.

• "What?" cried Coralie.

"Alas! Coralie, I know my father exceedingly well," said Rosamund. "I perceived in a moment that his extreme coolness was due only to a desire to reassure us. I could see that all the time he was talking to Mr. Mott, pretending to take his part, he was much more uneasy than we were. You will see how he will try to carry on the same terrible comedy."

Coralie threw herself on a chair and hid her face with her hands. In a moment, however, she started to her feet. Her hands were no longer before her face; they were clenched as her arms fell rigidly on each side of her body.

"I cannot stay here inactive any longer," she said. "I must be doing something. I will know the worst."

She picked up her cap from where she had thrown it on the floor. It left its outline done in rain-water on the oaken board.

At the same instant Lord Glasnamara appeared at a door leading to the great corridor. He was in his usual evening dress, and he held the door open for Lady Glasnamara to enter. •

• "Is it possible that you haven't got rid of your damp frock, my dear?" cried her ladyship. "I never heard of such imprudence! • Rosamund, you don't seem to know that it is already ten minutes past eight."

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"Why was not dinner announced at the usual hour?" asked his lordship, with a look of benign inquiry.

"Well, Mr. Mott—" began her ladyship.

"Is dinner to be put off indefinitely because Mr. Mott happens to be lying, for the benefit of his health, between hot blankets?"

"May it please your lordship and ladyship, dinner is served," came the voice of the butler out of the distance.

With a cry Coralie pressed her cap down on her head and rushed to the door leading onto the porch. She was followed by Rosamund, who snatched up her cap from the chair where she had thrown it.

They were both followed by the protesting shout of Lord Glasnamara.

The iron-studded door banged.

CHAPTER XLVIII

The transition from the dim light of the oaken hall into the night was startling to both girls. They had stepped from the dimness of glowing red peat and rare candles in sconces into the brilliancy of moonlight.

A young moon was hanging over the height of Carrig-na-Pogue, but all the light of day had not yet faded out of the blue of the western sky. The whole world seemed to have been washed clean by the recent rain. Sounds of innumerable rills came from among the firs, and here and there, amongst the wet, glittering boughs, the gleam of a new-made stream appeared. All the boughs were glittering with their dripping drapery, for the wind had risen when the rain had ceased, and the trees were waving—the low fir-trees in the moonlight—like an army with banners.

And on the wings of the wind came the sullen, ceaseless roar of the seas that roamed about the Rosses.

What a transformation had been brought about in the world, since Coralie had been on the mountain-side!

“Why did we not come away sooner?” she cried in the ear of Rosamund, as they stood together not a dozen yards from the entrance to the Castle, sending their eyes over the awakened world, from where the stars seemed circling round the peaks of the Slieve

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Gorm range to where the moon floated over Carrigna-Pogue, with the planet Jupiter almost within the clasp of her crescent.

"Why did we not come away sooner?" said Rosamund. "Thank God for the moonlight. I know what moonlight is on the lough. It is the difference between the gladness of life and the horror of death—moonlight and darkness on the lough. The moon sets between the headlands. The boat will not have to grope her way."

"Oh, blessed moon!" cried Coralie. She recollected having read a poem that began with that invocation; it had always seemed to her rather a foolish thing. Most people would be strongly prejudiced against a poem beginning with an address to the moon; but now she felt that there had never been written a verse so full of beauty and deep feeling. "Oh, blessed moon!" she said once more. "It stands as the angel stood—between the living and the dead. It stands between us and death. Oh, Rosamund, when we looked at it from the terrace for the past three nights—since it was only the merest thread of silver—could we have thought that—that its shining should mean to us the difference between happiness and misery?"

"Ah, when it did break through the clouds," said Rosamund, "was it in time? Was it in time?"

They had paused at the foot of the track that led up the mountain and made a junction with the road curving past the round tower of Ardkill to the fishing village at the termination of the lough.

And while the wonder of the potentialities of usefulness of the satellite which she had hitherto

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regarded as a purely ornamental orb was dawning, upon Coralie, she was so absorbed that she failed to hear the sound of footsteps behind her—she failed to see the figure of Lord Glasnamara on his way to her and Rosamund. His voice coming from the dripping firs startled both girls.

“Any one who would assign a limit to a woman’s love of romance would be a daring person,” growled Lord Glasnamara.

“I knew that you would be quite unable to stay indoors with that doubt racking your mind,” said Rosamund.

“Doubt? doubt? What doubt?” said he. “Oh, I understand what you mean. You never were further astray in your life, my dear. I never had a doubt—the least doubt—that Mr. Mott would shake off, by the aid of hot blankets, his incipient catarrh. But he really did get wet.”

“Had we not better take the steeper track? It is the shorter,” said Coralie. She felt that Lord Glasnamara’s affected pleasantry was on the verge of the ghastly. She was not able to hear it even with a smile, and yet a short time before she had laughed at the humorous narrations of Bertie, though they had followed hard upon her tears—hard upon his revelation to her of her appalling folly.

“It depends on where you mean to go,” said Lord Glasnamara in reply to Coralie. “By the by, where are you going to take your walk, girls?”

“My dear pater, there is really no need for such uneasiness as you are displaying by your consummate self-possession,” said Rosamund.

Her father took his rebuke in silence. He gave

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Coralie his hand to assist her to jump over one of the larger of the newly formed rills that had turned the path into a river-bed, and she accepted his friendly aid with a word of gratitude. He said something discursive about spates and trout; but no further word did any of the party speak until they reached the ancient Celtic cross above the holy well. The shadow projected on the side of the mound seemed abnormally long to their eyes, for they had never seen the cross in the light of so low a moon.

A man who was kneeling in front of the stone arose out of the long shadow with startling suddenness.

He was a native of the village, and Lord Glasnamara inquired of him if the yacht had returned yet, and if the fishing yawl was all right.

The moonlight was clear enough to show the look of uneasiness in the man's face as he folded his old hat up with great neatness—the caubeen does not materially suffer by such treatment.

"Why shouldn't herself be all right, my lard?" said the man, with a well-simulated, but not sufficiently well-simulated, look of surprise on his face.

"Don't you know that one of the yawls was dismasted in the squall and caught in the cross-tides?" asked his lordship.

"Indeed I heard the boys gabbin' something about that, or maybe the other nonsense, entirely," replied the man, giving an extra fold-in to the rim of his caubeen.

"And maybe you heard that the yacht went out to her assistance?" said Lord Glasnamara.

"Maybe I did, my lard, but 'tis a short memory I have, and it's not misself that can thrust it from

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here to the tide," said the man. "And 'tis a fine night for a walk, that it is, your lardship."

Lord Glasnamara staggered back, whispering but one word.

Rosamund stepped forward and caught the man by the arm, putting her face close to his.

"Do you mean to tell us that they are all lost—all drowned—that not one of them was saved?" she cried.

"There was one of them saved, miss," said the man. "Yes, one of them, and he was the one that didn't leave the shore—so the boy said, but maybe there's no truth entirely in what they said. It's not misself would believe all that I hear. But I thought that there'd be no harm saying a prayer for their souls, though they may be as safe and sound as you or misself, may the heavens be their bed this blessed night!"

The man crossed himself, and Rosamund's hand dropped from his arm. He walked slowly away, and knelt once again on the smooth stones at the foot of the cross.

The three people watched him in silence. The characteristic evasions of the man gave an added force to the tragic elements of his story which he told so unwillingly.

"In one hour," said Lord Glasnamara, with his head bent to the ground. He had seated himself on a stone at the side of the path. "One hour! My poor child!"

He put out a hand to Rosamund.

She went to him and took it; but only for an instant. Then she almost flung it from her, crying:

"I'll not believe it! I'll not believe that they are

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drowned until I see their bodies on the beach. I tell you they are not drowned. What does it matter if the man did say—what he said? Every one knows how the people here assume the worst—the very worst—and fancy that tidings can only be true when they are evil tidings. Are you not coming on, pater? Oh, dear old pater, you are never going to be the first to give in? Cora, you surely are not the one to believe that God is so merciless. Come on with me, Cora."

"To the beach—to the beach—you spoke of the beach just now," said her father, in a low voice, but with his head raised an inch or two.

"I shall go with you. I believe in God," said Coralie.

"You will come with us, dear pater," said Rosamund, kneeling down on the path beside him and putting an arm round his neck.

"I am better here. This is the proper place for me," he replied.

"Then we shall go alone and bring back the good tidings to you," said Rosamund.

"No good tidings can ever come to me," he said; and once more his head sank into his hands.

"Come," said Rosamund to Coralie.

At that moment the moon seemed to plunge into the depths of a heavy cloud, and the change that came over the landscape was miraculous in its suddenness. For an instant it seemed as if all the light in the world was extinguished. The best of wet roads that had been glittering like glass in the moonlight became black as the shadow of the cloud swept swiftly over them, and the cliff-faces that had been white, as though overspread with silver lace, became

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cowl'd with crape. From peak to peak of the long mountain-range that dwindled away to the Bay of the Ards, rolled the shadow of the cloud, and through the sudden darkness there fell the plaintive cries of innumerable sea-birds—the curlew, the wild drake, and the plover. These notes died away among the hills, but before they had quite ceased to sound, the curious clamour made by a flock of wild geese flying overhead filled the air as the birds went whirring and whirling down the dark glen to the Bay of the Ards.

Rosamund, who had heard of the superstition, common in some parts of Ireland, as well as England, which associates recently disembodied spirits with a flock of wild geese, shuddered at the sounds that rang through the air confusedly and then waned away down the depths of the glen. She saw that her father was also affected by his recalling the legend.

And then the moon broke free from the last rolling billow of cloud and the world leaped into light once more.

Coralie grasped Rosamund with both hands, staring, with terror in her face, towards the old stone cross.

Rosamund uttered a startled sob.

Lord Glasnamara sprang to his feet.

Standing there by the side of the cross, the moonlight revealed the semblance of two men, and the white face of one was the face of Barry Joyce, and the white face of the other was the face of Algy Grafton.

There they stood—silent—white in the moonlight—bareheaded—ghostly.

The man who was praying on the low ground beneath the cross saw the figures also. With a cry in his native tongue, he fell face forward to the ground.

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And then there appeared in the group a third figure, also white and ghostly in the moonlight—the figure of Bertie Joyce.

The two others looked at him from head to foot in silence, and he stood with his head bent before them. The silence became appalling. It was so very different from what would have happened in life.

The sound of the waves rolling through Lough Omeragh had a note of exultation in its clamour.

Then the silence was broken by the sound of Algy Grafton's voice.

"Look here, Bertie, old chap," he said—every one on the side of the slope beside the cross heard him. "Look here, stow that rot that you were jawing about, and go on in front of us. We want you to elst Fletcher to fetch out our togs on the sly to the coach-house, and six rough towels. Hot towels—devilled towels. You see, we should never survive it if we were to appear in the hall as we are at this moment."

"Go on, like a good chap," said Barry; "and tell Sullivan to brew us two stiff tumblers."

"And only one lump of sugar in each, and a small one at that," added Algy.

Then the man who was lying with his face to the ground leaped up, saying:

"By the token, 'tis alive they are, after all; spirits don't drink spirits."

"Algy—Barry!"

The voices came from where the group of three were standing in the path; they had previously been concealed by the long shadow of the rock.

Algy and Barry started, gazed in surprise to the path. Rosamund was racing toward them.

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With an exclamation of fear—almost of horror—the two men turned round and rushed headlong down the slope.

And that was how it came that Bertie alone was being hugged, and in full view of the native who had been so active with his prayers a few minutes before.

“‘Prayin’ for the sows of live corpses—that’s what misself has been after doin’,” said the man. “Well, if ever I believe a word that them rapscallions say, may I be waked without the whiskey that’s the curse of the country, God bless it!”

CHAPTER XLIX

"You see," said Bertie, "they were not fit to be seen, even by moonlight; that's why they cut their cable. They were making arrangements with me to get their togs brought out to the coach-house for them to dress there."

"And the stiff tumblers—don't forget the stiff tumblers, and only one lump of sugar to each," said Coralie.

"And we took them for ghosts!" cried Rosamund.

"And I took you for a ghost, too, when you came up, and you were the nicest ghost of the flock," cried Coralie. "But why didn't you come up with the others, Bertie?"

"I hadn't the heart," said Bertie. "You see, my bad luck held me ashore when they were having their fun out there, and it wasn't fit—you see it would never have done—"

"What would never have done?" asked Coralie.

"It would never have done for me to walk alongside them, when I had done nothing," replied Bertie.

"Of course, they said it was all Thomas—"

"All Thomas—what Thomas?" asked Coralie.

"Oh, you know—all tommy—tommy-rot. But there was no tommy. So I walked behind them. And they picked the four men off the yawl. She had drifted on the reef at Duncraig. That was a bit of

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seamanship for you—and the tide running five knots, and hardly any light in the sky. They did it before the squall came on. The yawl went to pieces in the squall. That's how the report got through the village that every one was lost. And Barry got his jacket ripped up to the collar, and they both lost their caps and got wet to the skin. They're both objects; but it was just my luck not to have a chance of being as dreadful to look at as the worst of them. But where's the pater?"

The pater had crept round to the other side of the stone cross, and was standing there in silence.

Rosamund went to his side.

"You need not have been complaining of your luck, my dear Bertie," said Coralie. "You are quite as much wet as either of the others. You couldn't have been wetter if you had gone down with the yawl."

"I'm no wetter than you are," said he. "You came out to see if you could lend a hand—and you didn't wait to change. That was so like you, Cora. But there's no reason why you shouldn't change now. Did you see the way Algy went down the slope? You wouldn't think that a few months ago he was as lame as—as—"

"As Nemesis," suggested Cora.

"Nemesis? Nemesis? What put Nemesis into your head, anyway?" said Bertie.

"I don't know; only somehow Nemesis came into my head," said she. The moonlight was not strong enough to let him see the full significance of her smile. He could only guess that she was smiling a smile of some significance.

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But he made his guess.

"Isn't Nemesis another name for retribution?" he whispered. "If a chap has shown himself to be a sweep first, and a coward later on, hasn't Nemesis got a show with him sometimes when he least thinks of it?"

"I've heard something like that before now," she replied. "And I've also heard that Nemesis occasionally overtakes people who are too lazy to change their wet garments. I'll race any one on the mountain-side to the Castle."

And it was with the step of a young doe upon the side of Slieve Gorm—the image is taken from a lyric in the Erse tongue by Bard Cormac MacCormac—and with her hand in Bertie's, that Coralie returned to the Castle. Rosamund and her father followed in a more leisurely fashion. Lord Glasnamara was deeply affected by the incidents of the night; quite half an hour had passed before he was measuring out his phrases in inches of delicate sarcasm and graceful badinage as usual.

Coralie's dress was not made of a material that coquetted with the rain. The heaviest rainfall known to the west coast of Ireland failed to penetrate the cloth. Only her hair was as full of tangles as Néera's, and it was on this account that she was ordered to drink a medicinal preparation of which Sullivan, the butler, alone possessed the recipe—"with one lump of sugar, and a small one at that," she remarked to her maid when the latter held up her hands at the sight of the mass of tangles which the removal of mademoiselle's cap revealed.

"Mais ce n'est pas possible que vous buvez de



"One lumps of sugar, and a small one at that."

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"ponche, mademoiselle!" cried the maid. "Quel honneur!"

"Mais oui, en verité," said Coralie. "Je crois bien que le ponche Irlandais est un[•] boisson très distingué—très délicat."

The maid flung up her hands once again, and Coralie swallowed part of the medicine without making a wry face.

The supper which they all made off the ruin of the dinner was the most joyous meal the party had had together since they had become a party. Bertie said nothing further about his ill-luck, for Bernard Mott did not appear that night. It was rather curious that the only one who had suffered from the adventures of the night was Mr. Mott, the only one who had not seen his way clearly to become a participator in the adventure. He had gone early to bed, Lady Glasnamara said, in apologising for his absence, for he felt greatly fatigued, and besides, he had got wet, as perhaps he had mentioned before placing himself unreservedly in the hands of his host.

His name was never mentioned by any one except his apologist, Lady Glasnamara, and so the night was a delightful one, with the entertainment of harp music and pipe music and pianoforte music, but not over much of any one of them; and very late that night Bertie gave his friends an illustration of how the hornpipe was danced aboard the ships of the Mediterranean squadron, and challenged any one present to discover in any of its movements the smallest suggestion of a degeneration due to the influence of the saraband, the farantelle, or any of the foreign kickshaws—he called them kickshaws for reasons of his

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own, and for kicks he thought that a certain Greek dance which he had learned on the island of Crete fairly took the cake. Well, if they particularly wished, he would give the company some idea of the Greek dance!

He did give them—yes, some idea

It was when Rosamund had gone to her room that Coralie's maid conveyed the compliments of her mistress to Mademoiselle Joyce (pronounced Joys), and would she have the goodness to permit Miss Randal an interview of five—ten minutes—before she sleep, to say a word?

Rosamund begged Celestine to say that she would be most happy to see Miss Randal immediately.

"I had no chance of talking to you apart from the others," said Coralie, when she seated herself beside her friend on the little sofa.

"I had no chance, either; I was trying to ask you if I might go to your room for a moment," said Rosamund.

Then there was a silence. Coralie caught a strand of her own hair and began coiling it on her finger. Rosamund did the same with one of her darker tresses. Then the one looked at the other, and both laughed.

That gave Coralie a start.

"The fact is, Rosamund," said she, "we have had rather an exciting day."

"I consider it to be one of the most eventful days of my life—of our life," said Rosamund. "It is the day that marks the beginning of things coming right."

"If I could only think that," said Coralie, with a sigh.

"Why should you not think it, my dear child?"

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asked Rosamund. "Did not you—well, you told Mr. Mott that he was a coward. That was the beginning of things coming right. I clearly saw things shape from that happy moment."

"Ah, you know that when one is excited one says many things that one fears to think of afterwards."

"That is how excitement is healthy. My dear, we all need a spiritual Turkish bath now and again. An excitement such as we had to-day opens the pores, in the rather vulgar language of hygiene—the pores of the soul. Now don't tell me that you want to take back the coward."

"No; I certainly will not take back the coward."

"And I hope that you do not mean to take back—the other thing you said."

"I confessed to you that you had come to think that—"

"No, you didn't say a word about thinking; the only thing you thought was that there had been too much thinking. You confessed to me that you had come to know that you loved my brother. I will not have you take back that part of your confession for worlds."

"I will not take it back. I will repeat it—yes, over and over again. Yes, I love him—I love him—I love him!"

Her face had become gradually flushed as she spoke these words, and her head gradually sank with that sweet shame, which is more than half pride, of such a confession as was hers, until it was lying on Rosamund's shoulder.

"My dearest—my sweet sister!" said Rosamund, tenderly.

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"I am not ashamed; I am only ashamed of not having known my own heart sooner," said Coralie.

"You know it now—before it is too late—and that is enough, Coralie."

"I hope it is not too late. You said that things were coming right; well, let them come right of their own accord, if they are to come right. I don't wish any one to help them. You will not make any move, Rosamund?"

"You do not surely fancy that I would endeavour to push myself forward as an auxiliary to heaven, who has taken your love affairs in hand at last? Did I make the attempt to play the part of a little Providence towards you when I saw that you were doing your best to be a fool—you know that I have always believed that any girl who allows herself to be guided except by her own heart is a fool? I was a fool myself, and I did not deserve that things should come right with me."

"That is all I have to say. If I thought that he—"

"He shall never get the remotest hint from me, either that you called Mr. Mott a coward, or that you told me—what you did tell me. I promise you that. Only take my advice, Coralie; turn all your attention to the question of getting rid of the old love, before you think of being on with the new. That's the only piece of advice I give you. You'll have to face Mr. Mott to-morrow."

"I called him a coward. Is he a man?"

"You, at any rate, are not a coward. You will have to face him in the morning. Good-night."

CHAPTER L

• She was certainly not a coward; still, she awoke with a sense of uneasiness. It was not dispelled by the reflection that, after all, there was no grave issue to be decided. She was not a prisoner on trial. Bernard Mott was not her judge. He could not sentence her to a term of imprisonment, the effect of which would be a blight upon her life. He could not even sentence her to a term of exile from her friends at the Castle.

She began to consider what is the usual outcome of a quarrel between a young man and a young woman engaged to be married. What is the worst that can befall the young woman who has, in a fit of anger, applied an opprobrious name to the young man whom she has promised to marry? Of course the worst thing that could happen to the young woman would be to be left in the lurch by the young man—so, at least, she knew the majority of the girls of her acquaintance would say. With the majority of girls the lurch is the opposite to the church.

But the thought of being left in the lurch by Bernard Mott embodied no terror to her. The worst that could happen? Ah! Bernard Mott had an alternative in store for her that was infinitely worse; he might forgive her. She feared the fidelity of Mr. Mott. Her dread was the possibility that he would be magnanimous.

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And the result of her interview with him was to prove that she had not formed an exaggerated estimate of his good nature—his detestable good nature—his contemptible forgiving disposition.

He said "Good-morning" quite affably to every one on coming downstairs in the morning. And the magnanimity of his nature showed itself early; for he smiled quite in his usual way upon Coralie, and expressed a hope that she experienced no ill effects of her wetting. No? Well, so much for good luck; but she must be more cautious in future.

And the funny part of it all was that he looked on himself as the hero of the leading incident of the previous night; because he was the only one who had found it necessary to wrap himself in hot blankets and to go to bed at the usual dinner-hour, he had actually come to think of himself as a hero. He had never before been wet to the skin, and the inconvenience of the thing assumed heroic proportions in his eyes. On the same analogy the man who acquires book learning, painfully and after long hours of study snatched from a commonplace avocation, believes himself to be learned, when he has only mastered a few of the elements of learning which a schoolboy achieves in the course of a diligent year.

Of course, a hint of the direction which his thoughts were taking was enough for Algy Grafton. Algy confessed to being very anxious for the health of Mr. Mott. He hoped that Mr. Mott was not foolhardy in coming down to breakfast after all he had undergone. And then Mr. Mott perceived his chance for a sly retort—the verbal equivalent to a playful dig in the ribs—upon Major Grafton and Barry Joyce.

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"There was some foolhardiness displayed last night, but not by me," he said, with more than John-sonian promptness.

"Bravo, Mr. Mott! They may well hang their heads," cried Lord Glasnamara. And sure enough, both Algy and Barry hung their heads—Algy especially. They were both silent. Mr. Mott was smiling.

Bertie sprang to his feet.

"Confound it all!" he cried. "You don't mean to think—to think that—that—oh, damn it all!"

He flung down his serviette and overturned his chair. That was something, anyway. The noise was terrific, and following hard upon his oath it constituted a very effective demonstration, in the naval definition of a threatening movement.

Coralie caught one arm and Rosamund the other.

"You shall not go, Bertie," cried the former. "It's a free country. You shall say what you have to say. I agree with you whatever you are going to say."

"Yes, it's a free breakfast-table—the Radical ideal," said Lord Glasnamara. "Come along. Speak up, my boy. We are all equal here and elsewhere. We are not living under a republic."

Bertie raised his chair and examined its knees. He picked up his serviette and carefully rolled it up into a hard ball.

"All that I want to say now is that—that I want to apologise for what I said just now. I was a bit of an ass, but I don't think I'll be so again."

That was all Bertie had to say.

And no one had much to say after he had spoken.

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"It was when every one had left the breakfast-table—Bertie was the first to leave—that Bernard sought an interview with Coralie. She had remained in the hall in order to give him the chance of asking her for an interview. He did it very kindly."

"You have not given me much of your time lately. Do come out to the terrace with me, if only for a few minutes," he said.

"Oh, yes," she replied, quickly. "I will go with you to the—no, not to the terrace." (She suddenly recollected that it was on the terrace she had had her last confidential interview with him, and it had ended in her submission to his stronger will.)

"Any place," said he.

"The terrace. Come along," she cried, after only the briefest pause. She defied precedent! She would not avoid the terrace. She knew now that she loved Barry.

"I thought that I would like to speak with you alone," said he, when he had closed the glass door leading from the drawing-room. I know that you have been feeling uncomfortable since last night."

"Oh, no; I have not felt the least uncomfortable," she replied. "The cloth of my dress was good, the rain did not penetrate it. And I wore my mountain shoes, too."

"I did not mean physical discomfort," said he. "No; but surely—do you recollect what you said to me when I entered the hall—when I was weary—broken down—wet to the skin—overcome with excitement of all that I had gone through in doing my duty?"

"Yes, I remember; I said you were a coward," said she.

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"Yes, that was the word you made use of. I must confess that it rankled in my soul as a barbed arrow dipped in poison, would rankle in my flesh—it rankled—yes, until I recollected that, after all, you were only a girl—you were also greatly excited; you had not acquainted yourself with the facts of the case. You would be the first to admit that you had spoken too hastily."

He paused. He was anxious to give her a chance of expressing her regret.

She did not seem very ready to take advantage of the opening. She remained silent.

"I will not do you the injustice to believe that you are not grieved at having so falsely and cruelly accused me," said he. "No; I am sure that, bitterly though the accusation rankled in my soul, the thought of how you had wronged me rankled more bitterly in your heart. That is why I have asked you to hear me now; I wish to reassure you. I wish to tell you that you need not fear that I will not make every allowance for you. Coralie, I forgive you—frankly and freely and unconditionally, and if I can forgive you, surely you can forgive yourself. Let me be your advocate with yourself. Let me persuade you to forgive yourself."

"Mr. Mott, I have nothing to forgive myself," she said.

"What—what? Oh, Coralie!"

"Nothing—so far as last night is concerned. I spoke on the impulse of the moment, to be sure—"

"I knew it. But I forgive you."

"I don't want you to forgive me."

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"That will make my forgiveness the more magnanimous. Let us talk no more about it."

"Mr. Mott, I want you to release me from the promise I made to marry you."

"Do not talk such folly, my child. Do you really fancy that I think such reparation necessary for a fault which I have already forgiven? Nay, Coralie, such a sacrifice as you are willing to make—"

"Oh, you make me lose all patience with you. I never knew what an egoist was before. Mr. Mott, I did you a great wrong in leading you to believe that I loved you. I did not know what love was when I told you that I would marry you. I thought it was something quite different from what I now know it to be. I now know that I never loved you."

"Coralie, you know that I love you."

His voice was full of grave tenderness.

"No—no—no!" she cried. "You do not know what love is. You could not have loved me and come back to me as you did last night, when the others had gone into danger. Love for me would have sent you out with them to try to save the lives of the men who were ready to perish. You would have gone with them for love of me. One cannot love and be a coward, and you showed yourself to be a coward. I will never marry a coward—never—never! Oh, what a chance you had! If you had gone into that danger last night, and had come back, saying to me, 'I did it for you,' I would have forgiven you all, and have married you. But now it is too late."

"Is it?" said he, taking a step nearer to her and fixing his eyes upon hers.

She knew that he was making the attempt to over-



"I now know that I never loved you."

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come her will, as he had done a few nights before on the same terrace. She already felt her will weakening, but she had now a talisman to neutralise his arts. She had a talisman now that she had not then, and she knew it.

"I love Barry—I love Barry," she whispered to herself, and faced him.

"I will not release you from the effects of your promise," said he, in his voice of incantation and with his eyes looking into hers. "I will not release you—you do not wish to be released; you wish to keep your promise to me. You are to say 'Yes—yes.' Now, answer me, 'Yes.'"

"No—no—no!" she cried. "You are a coward. I care nothing for your schemes. I love a brave man."

"You shall marry me," he said, when he had recovered from the shock of surprise which he sustained on finding that he had lost his power of impressing her with the accuracy of what he said, without considering what his words actually amounted to. "You shall marry me. I refuse to set you free; and I know that you are not the sort of girl to free yourself without my consent. You are mine, Coralie. Ah, think of what you and I shall accomplish—hand in hand—side by side—for the healing of the nations—for the—"

She put her fingers into her ears, and with a cry flung herself through the door and into the drawing-room beyond—into the arms of Rosamund, who was waiting for her.

"He will not release me—he will not release me; he is a coward—a coward," she cried.

And Mr. Mott heard her.

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He thought it well to leave the terrace by the steps leading into the garden.

That afternoon brought a letter from America for Coralie which puzzled her greatly. It also brought a letter with the same postmark for Lord Glasnamara, and the contents of this letter startled him greatly. He was very grave during the evening, and after the dreariest dinner that had ever taken place at Cashel-na-mara, he made a sign to Barry, and Barry followed him into the little room where the accounts of the estate were kept.

"I have had a letter from Coralie's father, Barry," said Lord Glasnamara. "He has lost everything. He is as poor as when he left Ireland. It all went in one week—a manœuvre of a combination of Wall Street jobbers. That's how things are managed in America; a man is either at the top of the ladder or at the bottom. That's the elevator system. There's no walking upstairs in America. You get into the elevator on the ground floor, and in five seconds you are a millionaire on the twentieth story. Another ring of the bell, you step out on the ground floor a pauper. Denis Randal is on the ground floor to-day. I heard something about the awful week in Wall Street."

"How does this concern me in particular?" asked Barry.

"Well, the fact is, I don't know how I am to break the news to Coralie; it's plain that her father only hinted at the crash to her. How am I to tell her—how am I to tell her? There's the letter."

After a moment's consideration, Barry said:

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“The most natural way of telling her is by telling the man whom she has promised to marry. Should he not be the one to break the news to her?”

“The truth is, I don't like the fellow, Barry.”

“I've suggested the way you can pay him off.”

“But the fellow is a sweep; he may say something unkind to the girl. These things should be done with a tender hand.”

“Tender or rough, the thing should be done through him.”

“I don't like the idea,” said Lord Glasnamara, pacing the room. “Heavens! Just think of it! A fortnight ago the man was worth millions—pounds, mind you, not dollars—and now—”

Barry stood musing for some time.

“Yes, Mott must be the instrument,” said he at last. “She detests Mott, but she has not thrown him over yet.”

“He will save her that trouble now,” said his father. “I fancy I know this Mr. Mott. I don't detest him. No; on the contrary—he has made you a Conservative.”

“Independent.”

“Psha!”

Barry went to the door; but before he had opened it a sudden thought seemed to strike Lord Glasnamara.

“One word,” he said, as Barry paused at the door.

“I saw a look in your eyes just now that put an idea into my head—ah, never mind!”

Barry left the room.

CHAPTER LI

When Bernard Mott went to his room that night, after having a word or two with his host in the office-room, he seated himself on his bed and took from his pocket the letter which Lord Glasnamara had read to him, begging of him to communicate the contents to Coralie. He now perused the letter with his own eyes, scanning paragraph after paragraph, in case Lord Glasnamara had left out, with intent to deceive him, some vital sentence—some sentence that would change the meaning of the whole letter as communicated to him by Lord Glasnamara. He suspected his host—as, indeed, he did most people. He had honestly believed that the family of Joyce had invited Coralie to pay them a visit with a view to marry her eventually to Barry; it would suit the Joyce family extremely well to marry their heir to a young woman who would inherit millions; and he now thought that Lord Glasnamara was quite equal to forging a letter to make him, Bernard Mott, believe that Coralie's father had lost his wealth, so that he, Bernard Mott, might be led to free Coralie from her engagement to marry him.

He had spoken very grandly to Lord Glasnamara, and had asked for the letter, which he was now examining with all the acumen of the most careful expert that was ever made a fool of by the clumsiest of forgers.

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No, there was no mistake about it. There was no flaw anywhere. The letter was a genuine one, and he was saved.

That was the first thought that came to him. He was saved from the fate of being a penniless husband of a penniless girl.

What a mercy it was that he had not married her long ago. His position would have been deplorable; he might even be compelled to work.

But the first moment of exultation in regard to this particular piece of luck was followed by several moments of a less joyous type. He felt that he had been absolutely insulted by Fate. He had been made the sport of Fate, just as if he were an ordinary man. He had been mocked by dreams. He had the cup raised to his lips, and it had been dashed from his hand. He had sought to bind fortune to himself with ropes of gold, but they had turned out to be ropes of sand. He had—well, he had spent over fifteen pounds over this visit of his to Ireland, to say nothing of those casual disbursements which he had regarded as incidental to the position of a man who is about to marry an heiress.

Oh, he had been badly treated. He had heard some one say that Ireland was the grave of political reputations. But what was the reputation of a few politicians compared to all that he had lost through his association with Ireland?

Why, he had very nearly lost confidence in his own ability—in his own astuteness in dealing with the sons of men.

His only reflection that brought him any consolation was that the girl who had led him on to be made

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a fool of had lost all her money—that the people who had, he felt sure, enjoyed seeing him befooled, would not benefit by his discomfiture. He was only sorry that Barry Joyce had not married Coralie long ago, so that now he would be left with a penniless girl on his hands. That would indeed have been a jest on the part of Fate worthy of the best efforts at jocularitv on the part of the humourous gods. There would have been some fun in the spectacle of the discomfiture of the family who had intrigued to bring about the union of the heir to their barren acres with the heiress (as they supposed) to the millions of the man whose pitiful letter was now lying on the bed before him.

Oh, yes; he felt that he could have put Fate up to a good many tricks, but—

He sprung to his feet, and with savage energy set about the work of packing his portmanteau, which had cost him forty-two shillings in a shop off Tottenham Court Road. It was almost midnight when he sat down to write two letters—one to Lord Glasnamara, returning Mr. Denis Randal's letter, and the other to Mr. Denis Randal's daughter. Then he went to bed and slept fitfully until six o'clock in the morning. At that hour he rose, and with his new portmanteau in one hand and his hat-box and umbrella in the other, set out for that part of the road through Glen Dhu at which the usual long jaunting car carried for letters and possible, though infrequent, passengers.

In nine hours he was aboard the steamer, making a quick passage to Holyhead.

He had shirked the duty with which he had been entrusted by Lord Glasnamara. In the letter which

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he had left for Coralie he made no reference to the fact that her father was penniless. He merely said, that after due thought he found that his own self-respect would not permit of his regarding himself as any longer bound to a woman who had shown herself to be quite incapable of understanding him or appreciating his aims.

There was a light in her eyes as she showed Rosamund the letter which had been put into her hands shortly before breakfast; but the light which came into Rosamund's eyes was of quite a different sort.

"Miserable cur!" she muttered. "He has acted up to the last consistently with the estimate I formed of his character."

"Now you are wise after the event," said Coralie, with a laugh. "You told me yesterday only that you knew he would bind me to my promise, and yet—there is his release."

"Miserable cur!" said Rosamund again. "He has the effrontery to talk of his self-respect, when he has made it plain that he only released you because he learned that you were no longer an heiress to millions."

"No longer—what do you say? No longer—"

"My poor Coralie! It is left for me to tell you what my father trusted to that cur to tell you. Did your father not hint even in his letter to you yesterday at the catastrophe which has left him a ruined man—a penniless man?"

Coralie continued looking at her friend for some moments, then she turned away and seated herself in the nearest chair.

"So that's the meaning of the letter that puzzled

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me," she said. "I recollect now—oh, I should have known what he meant. Thank God! I am saved from that man, even though I am left without a cent. I am a beggar. But people who are saved from a wreck are happy, even though they may have lost a flock or two."

Rosamund laughed. She perceived that Coralie could only realise that she had escaped from Mott. She could not realise that she was penniless. She wondered how long it would be before she understood what it meant, looked at from all points of the compass.

And then Lord Glasnamara entered the hall with his unstamped letter in his hand.

"I have told Coralie that she is penniless," said Rosamund.

"Yes, and Mr. Mott has set me free," laughed Coralie.

And then she sat down and wept—not for grief that she was penniless, but in gladness of the newly recovered freedom.

Lord Glasnamara did not speak a word. He kissed his daughter and stroked Coralie on the hair.

On the whole, Coralie was the brightest one at the breakfast-table, though it must be admitted that Bertie was not far behind her. But Barry was thoughtful almost to the point of moodiness. And there was a general feeling of relief when the head-keeper was admitted, and presented several reports that required to be debated.

Coralie saw Barry passing the window shortly afterwards with a fishing-rod. Bertie also saw his brother, and frowned, seeing him. He then glanced

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in the direction of Coralie, hoping that she had not noticed his frown, but fearing that she had, for there was a good deal of sadness in the smile which she cast at him.

He was by her side in a moment.

"Come into the garden, Cora," he said. "We can't possibly have many more days with sunshine. It's warm as June."

He followed him down the slope of the garden, and on to the little bridge of planks with a rustic rail that spanned the little stream known as Garry-lin. They stood in the sunshine, leaning over the rail and looking into the flowing water.

"It's too bright for trout," said Bertie. "But Barry isn't gone for the fish. I know him and his ways. He's gone to think it out."

"To think it out?" she repeated.

"Yes; some chaps can only think when they have a pen in their hand. Others are no use unless they have a fishing-rod. A naval man is the utterest soft-roe without his telescope. Yes, Barry is gone to think it out."

She looked at him for a long time, and then said:

"That is what I must do, Bertie. I must try to think it out."

"Don't go until you hear what I have got to say to you," said he, gently. "I haven't got much to say to you except this: Things are coming round all right, as I knew they would. I know this, too; if there is any one in the world glad that you are come to your last dime, that one is Barry. I know old Barry, and I know there are some times when he's

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not shy. He was a bit stand off when you had your millions; but, by the Lord Harry! he'll not stand off now that you are nothing but yourself. That's all."

She gave him her hand.

"I must think it all out," she said. She left him on the little bridge, and then strolled along one of the tracks until she reached a secluded nook among the low firs that afforded her a splendid diorama of the hill ranges, from the purple of Slieve Gorm to the faint grey of the distant Bay of Ards. Here she seated herself to think out the situation.

Two hours she remained there lost to sight, but gradually coming to see clearly what the changed condition in her life meant relative to the people she loved best in the world.

As a result of her consideration of the many questions that presented themselves to her, she went to her room and wrote out a cablegram to her father. In composing it she forgot for the time being that she was no longer the daughter of a millionaire. She found that the cost of transmission amounted to eighteen pounds, fifteen shillings. The nearest telegraph office was at Ballysuggarth, four miles away; and the name of that particular hanger-on of the Castle whose duty it was to carry messages to the office was Rory O'Neal. She sent for him, and put her message and the money into his hand.

"Have ye the book, miss?" he inquired.

"The book, Rory?"

"Yes, miss; ye must let me have the savings-bank book before I can lodge the money for ye."

"But the money is to pay for the message."

"Sixpence is all that a telegorm costs, miss."

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"Oh! this one will cost more; eighteen pounds, fifteen shillings."

He smiled the smile of the knowing one.

"To be sure they'd take all ye'd choose to give them, miss, but I'll try them with a sixpence to start with," said Rery, taking the money and the message and walking off without further parley.

't was late that night when Barry found himself by the side of his father in the smoking-room.

"I should like to ask you one question," said Barry, suddenly. "I should like to ask you if you think that that letter from Coralie's father is a bona fide one."

"Bona fide—how?" asked his father.

"Well, it occurred to me that it might have been written at your suggestion to get rid of that fellow," said Barry.

"You pay a graceful compliment to my acumen," said his father. "But I give you my word that I don't deserve it. I believe that the letter describes approximately the position of Denis Randal."

"Then I shall ask Coralie to-morrow to marry me," said Barry.

"Then you will do a very imprudent thing," said the father. "I will not deny that it was the earnest hope of her father and of your father to see you married to Coralie. But now—well, if she was even moderately endowed I should be satisfied; she is the sweetest girl that lives, but—penniless. Barry, you know as well as I do the position of our affairs."

"I know that I shall ask Coralie to marry me."

"And if she accepts you, you will both be happy—

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and you will both be miserable. You will be happy in loving her; but when the money cares begin—and they will begin the day you are married—your time of wretchedness will begin.”

“I know that you are right; but life is made up of happiness and wretchedness, and I shall ask Coralie to marry me.”

“~~But~~ that I had a more tangible asset than my blessing to offer you, Barry.”

“I don't ask for any other, sir.”

And the father and son shook hands gravely.

CHAPTER LII

It was Rosamund who rushed into the hall when nearly every one had sat down to the breakfast-table the next morning. She had a letter of two pages in her hand.

"Coralie has gone," she cried.

"Gone—gone where?" said Lord Glasnamara.

"Gone home—back to America. She was dressed and off by the post-car at six o'clock. She left a letter for me—this is it."

Rosamund threw herself into a chair and gasped.

Lord Glasnamara looked at Barry. Barry had become pale.

"What a strange step to take," said Lady Glasnamara. "How does she explain it? What about her trunks?"

"She asks us to have them sent after her by the next steamer," said Rosamund. "She says that she has thought out the matter, and she feels that her place is by the side of her father."

"She will be at Ballybeg by now, and will leave by the nine-forty-five train for the junction to Queens-town. She will catch the Majestic this evening."

Bertie had made the calculation. He was addressing it to his brother.

Barry pulled out his watch. The hour was ten minutes to nine. He made for the door.

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"Fingal—try Fingal!" shouted Bertie.

"Fingal—I think so," replied Barry, disappearing.

"What does he mean to do?" asked Lord Glasnamara, anxiously.

"Why, what is left for him to do except to follow her and bring her back?" cried Bertie.

"Fourteen Irish miles. Is Fingal good for that inside the hour?" asked Algy.

"By the skin of his teeth," said Bertie. "I'll see him off." He bolted to the door.

"Oh, I should have suspected her—I should have watched her," complained Rosamund. "I might have known that she meant to—"

"Perhaps it is just as well," said Lady Glasnamara, in a resigned voice.

"I hope he'll catch her," said Algy.

"You are a sportsman," said Lord Glasnamara.

"I'll lay four to one on Barry, anyway," said Algy.

"Oh, you have no feeling—no thought—no delicacy," moaned Rosamund.

She rushed to a window, flung it open, and waved her handkerchief, shouting, "Good luck!" as Barry, mounted on that prince of Irish hunters, Fingal, went down the drive.

Before he was out of hearing every one in the room had shouted "Good luck!" through the window.

"Good luck, whatever that may mean," said Lord Glasnamara. "Good luck. Does that mean overtaking her or failing to overtake her?"

"He'll do it, never fear," cried Bertie, cheerily, from outside. "Old Fingal is fresh, and he knows all about it. He's pulling Barry's arms out of their sockets by now."

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And so he was.

Down the long drive went the man and the horse, the pebbles shooting among the firs like hailstones, and then up the soft road through Glen Dhu. Barry held him at first, for the slope upwards was heart-breaking, though Fingal affected to regard it as a trifle. But when the higher level was reached, and the road branched off, with the holy well on one side and the round tower on the other, the horse had his own way over the flat country. He got into his stride, and with lowered head settled well down to his work. He came in sight of the narrow path that wound round the base of the mountains in the distance, and he did not need his rider to put him at the stone wall to enable them to make the shorter cut across the fields to the mountain road. He went over the obstacle like an india-rubber tennis-ball, and pulling himself together for a gallop, he cut across the undulating moorland, rushing the great heather hedges as if they were fresh-cut grass hillocks. He gave his head a shake as he breasted the sharp broken slope below the road, and he climbed up to the road with scarcely an effort. He flashed round the ruined castle of the Ardagh, and an old man, looking after cows—a few cows that were among the wiry grass of the ditch-side—took off his caubeen with a shout of "More power!" and then painfully climbed to a bit of broken wall to see the last of the gallop.

Four miles of a run over every kind of ground the good horse had finished, and he was giving no sign of slackening when his rider hinted to him to take it easy on the upward grade. Unwillingly he broke into a trot, and Barry patted him on the neck as he gained

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the highest curve of the road and the splendid valley of Glengharra lay spread out before his eyes. The five lakes of the glen looked like the pieces of a diamond necklet in the sunshine, and they were bordered by the amethyst of the bog land beyond. The mountains that curved inwards to form the farther walls of that splendid basin of Glengharra were too far off to give their curves to the eye, but under the grey billowy silk of the containing clouds that swam across the lesser valleys a glimpse of velvety purple appeared.

Often as he had been in the arms of this scenery, so to speak, he had never before felt so thrilled by it as he did at this moment. The thought "Shall I be in time?" thrilled him as he looked out over the land that he had yet to traverse. He saw where the road got lost in one of the narrow gaps between the hills, and he saw where it reappeared in the distance. The little market town of Ballybeg lay, he knew, beyond the most distant of the hills, and he had to reach it within forty minutes. He did not need to urge Fingal onward. The horse was only too willing. Down the mountain-side came a dark-haired girl, leading a donkey bearing two "creels" of brown peat. On the roadside was a boy driving along a flock of geese in a very leisurely fashion. In one of the loops of the string of lakes a man sat fishing from an ancient punt. Fingal broke into a gallop, but Barry brought him back to his trot as the road sloped down to the borders of the lake opposite the island castle of Briandearg. But when the road curved away to the northward, making a long detour to avoid the gap of Duncraig, Barry followed its curve for only a mile; then he put Fingal at the ditch, and clearing it,

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plunged down the steep bank to the last of the lakes. He had made up his mind to try to cut off two miles of the route by leaving the road and crossing the lake at its one shallow end.

The horse did not hesitate for a second on the bank. He walked into the water and was soon knee-deep in it. On he went until the saddle-girths were soaked—until the water was flashing on his broad chest—but no deeper did he sink. He splashed his way into the shallows and walked, glossy and dripping, up the soft bank. Two miles of yielding turf lay between the lakeside and the road where it would have to be picked up. The horse felt that his hour was come at last, and began his gallop. Barry rode him with bent head and loose rein. The soft turf seemed to be only patted by the hoofs. On he stretched until the lakeside became moorland and the moorland mingled with the brown roadway. On, without drawing rein, through the green glen that led out of the valley of Glengharra, the sparse trees stretching weird skeleton arms towards man and horse; went past in a flash the little stream that crossed the roadway; went past like a fluttering riband the man with the turf-carts on the road, who pulled up to one side and shouted a word of greeting in Irish; and then in the distance a chapel spire appeared—a thatched cabin or two among the great stones scattered about the low mounds marked the approach to the little town.

Then suddenly, springing out of nowhere and apparently leading nowhere, a railway line.

He had reached Ballybeg, and his ride was over.

He went at a sharp trot down the village street,

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where a market was being held. He steered cleverly through the barelegged children and the greyhound-looking pigs, the protesting geese, and the half-casks of butter. Two of the constabulary were giving some advice to a man who had a ragged pony for sale. They saw Barry and saluted. He asked them if the train had come in. They wished to know what train he meant. The town were the centre of a complex system.

"The train to the junction—nine-forty-five," he shouted.

"She's not due yet, sir," said one of the men. "The nine-forty-five leaves here at a quarter to ten on week days, at a quarter past ten on market days, and at eleven on Sundays. You've half an hour and five minutes to spare, sir."

He had arrived in time, so far as the train was concerned. But would he be in time?

He dismounted at the inn where the post-car put up. He looked along the windows, hoping to see the face of Coralie at one of the panes; but he was disappointed. There was a face at a window, but it was the red face of a cattle-dealer. A groom was by the side of Fingal in a moment, and he had no hesitation in affirming by all the saints whose names occurred to him that the horse had been ridden. His honour might leave him with every confidence in his hands, however.

"The young lady that arrived by the post-car, half an hour ago—is she in the house?" asked Barry.

"'Twas misself druv her to the railway wid me own hands," said the man. "A jewel she is, if there's any in the country; but not much to speak of

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at breakfast; but her maid was a bit of an 'upstart'—craytur—oh, yes; at the station. Didn't I tell you, Honour that I druv her there—ay, and the other that spoke the eyetalian. But 'twas herself that's the sweetest—the—"

Barry gave him half a crown, and patted Fingal on his neck.

She was in the little waiting-room of the railway station with her maid. The latter had fallen asleep with her head leaning against the edge of the window.

He knew by the colour that came to her face when he stood before her that she loved him. He felt glad that, whatever might happen, he was in time to see that colour in her face.

"I am in time, Coralie," he said, as he took her hands. "You knew that I would follow you."

"I was afraid of it," she said.

"I have come to take you back, Coralie," said he.

"I cannot go back."

"That will mean that you do not care for—for—my loving of you. But you know that I do love you, Coralie?"

"I know it—I know it! The scales have fallen from my eyes."

"And I know that you love me."

"I do—indeed I do. That is why I cannot return with you."

"My dear love, I can appreciate what is in your heart. Ah, cannot you understand what is in mine? Coralie, cannot you understand how I felt when you came among us and I knew that I must love you? Cannot you understand how I came to perceive that it would be impossible for me to tell you that I loved

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"you so long as you remained the heiress to millions? Cannot you understand how I felt when my father showed me the letter which told me that you were no longer an heiress—that I was free to tell you that I loved you? Coralie, I do not believe that I would ever have told you that I loved you if your father had kept his millions. But now you will come back to me?"

"I cannot—oh, I cannot do you that injustice! It is because I love you—because I love the dear country, I am strong enough to separate myself from you—to leave you free, not to add to your burdens. There are others—I have seen her. You will be happy with her, and she will give her money to help our dear Ireland."

"Some one has been talking nonsense to you, Coralie. There is no one who can help me but you—you only, my Coralie. Do you fancy that if I had no heart to ask you to love me when you were rich, I could ask any other rich girl to be the wife of a poor man? If you do, I shall ride home and leave you to cross the Atlantic."

"No—no. I do not fear that, but—"

"What do you fear, then? After all, we are not as poor as some other people who are still in the world. There are millions of people, even in America, who would call us rich. It is only from the standpoint of the very wealthy we are poor. We shall not be able to afford a house in town."

"Oh, I hate town!"

"We may have to live in Ireland always."

"Oh, I never want to live anywhere else!"

"And I shall not want to live anywhere you do not

